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GUY RIVERS:
A TALE OF GEORGIA.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MARTIN FABER."

"Who wants
A sequel, may read on. Th' unvarnish'd tale,
That follows, will supply the place of one."

ROBERTS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

Wm

NEW-YORK:

HARPER & BROTHERS—82 CLIFF-STREET.

1834.



GUY RIVERS:

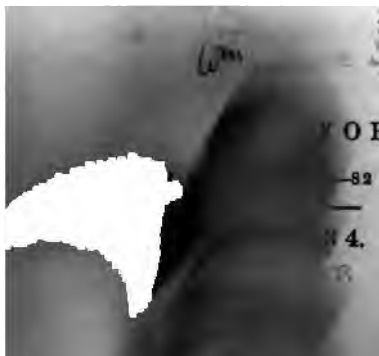
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HOW WASH
SLAVE
MAGAZ

TO CHARLES R. CARROLL, ESQ.,
OF SOUTH-CAROLINA—

To the true friend, who, from boyhood to manhood, has always maintained for me the same countenance—whose friendship no change of situation or circumstance has impaired or affected—whose advice has counselled—whose regards have cheered—whose encouragement, when I would have desponded, has stimulated and strengthened—who would not let me fear, and who taught me a familiar habit of hope—I dedicate this book, with the single wish,—not to seem extravagantly selfish,—that it may appear as worthy in the sight of others as he is estimable in mine.

THE AUTHOR.

New-York, April 17, 1834.

has endeavoured, however feebly, to extend the glance somewhat into causes, which, in most cases of moral analysis, is quite too much confined to effects. He will be understood readily, therefore, when he offers the story, not merely to those who read, but to those who think—to those who—unrestrained by the moral cant, which, permitting the surgeon to probe the wound of the human body, is unwilling to grant the physician of the human mind a like privilege—penetrating the superficialities and externals of man and society, are studious in tracing out the origin of those thousand moral obliquities in our fellows, upon which, though we always moralize, we cannot often be said to meditate.

GUY RIVERS.

CHAPTER I.

31 Who's he that o'er this desert country speeds
The sun fast sinking? He would seem a wight
All out of luck, and sadly venturous,
Standing some peril from the ruffian knife,
Or, at the best, a cold and roofless tent,
'Neath the bare sky."

IN the upper part of the State of Georgia, extending into the country of the Cherokee Indians—a region, at this period, fruitful of dispute—lying at nearly equal distances between the parallel waters of the Chatahoochie river, and that branch of it which bears the name of the Chestatee, from a now almost forgotten but once formidable tribe—will be found a long reach of comparatively barren lands, interspersed with hills, which occasionally aspire to a more elevated title, and garnished only here and there with a dull, half-withered shrubbery, relieved at intervals, though even then but imperfectly, by small clumps of slender pines that fling out their few and skeleton branches ruggedly and abruptly against the sky. The entire face of the scene, if not absolutely desolate, has, at least, a dreary and melancholy expression, which can

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not fail to elicit, in the bosom of the most indifferent spectator, a feeling of gravity and even gloom. The sparse clusters of ragged woods, and thin undergrowth of shrivelled herbage, gave token of the generally sterile character of that destiny, which seemed to have taken up its abode immediately within, while presiding over, the place. All around, as far as the eye could reach, a continual recurrence of the same objects and outline arrested and fatigued the gaze; which finally sickened of long levels of sand, broken with rude hills of a dull species of rock, and a low shrubbery from which all living things had taken their departure. Though thus barren to the eye, this region was not however, utterly deficient in resources; and its possessions were those of a description not a little attractive to the great majority of mankind. It was the immediate outpost—the very threshold of the gold country, now so famous for the prolific promise of the precious metal; far exceeding, in the contemplation of the knowing, the lavish abundance of Mexico and of Peru, in the days of their palmiest and most prosperous condition. Nor though only the frontier and threshold as it were to these swollen treasures, was the portion of country now under our survey, though bleak, sterile and to the eye uninviting, wanting in attractions of its own; it contained the signs and indications which denoted the fertile regions, nor was it entirely deficient in the precious mineral itself. Much gold had been gathered already, with little labour, and almost upon its surface; and it was perhaps only because of the little knowledge then had of its wealth, and of its close proximity to a more productive territory, that it had been suffered to remain unexamined and unexplored. Nature, thus, we may remark, in a section of the world seem-

ingly unblest with her bounty, and all ungarnished with her fruits and flowers, appeared desirous, however, of redeeming it from the curse of barrenness, by storing its bosom with a product, which, only of use to the world in its conventional necessities, has become, in accordance with the self-creating wants of society, a necessity itself; and however the bloom and beauty of her summer decorations may refresh the eye of the enthusiast, it would here seem, that, with an extended policy, she had created another, and perhaps a larger class, which, in the attainment of those spoils which are of less obvious and easy acquisition, would even set at nought those which have at all times been the peculiar delight and felicity of the former. Nothing is entirely barren in her dominions; and, to some spirits, her very solitude and sterility seem as inviting and grateful, as to others may appear her rich landscapes and voluptuous flowers.

It is towards the sunset of a fine afternoon in the month of May, that we would make our reader more particularly acquainted with the scene we have endeavoured to place before him. A rich summer sun—such as is the peculiar property of a southern region—of sufficient power, even in the moment of his decline, to convert into tributary glories the clouds which gathered around him, threw over all the scene his incomparable splendours, burnishing the earth with hues more richly golden, if not so valuable in the estimation of mankind, as the wealth which lay concealed within its bosom. The picturesque guise of the solitude, thus gloriously invested, was beautiful beyond description. Its charms became duly exaggerated to the mind, when coupled with the consciousness that the hand

of the mighty artist had been employed in the adornment of a prospect of itself totally uninviting and utterly unlovely. The solitary pine that, here and there, touched by the sunbeams, shone up like some burning spire—the undulating hills, catching in different gradations of shade and fulness, in a like manner, from the same inimitable gilder of creation, a similar garment—the dim outlines of the low and stunted shrubbery, sparingly distributing its green foliage over the picture, mingled here and there with a stray beam, dashed hurriedly, as it were, from the palette of the same artist—presented to the eye an outline perfectly unique in itself, and singularly characteristic of that *warm sadness* of sentiment (not to adopt too much of an oriental phraseology) with which, alone, it could have been properly contemplated.

At this point in our narration, a single traveller might have been seen emerging from the confines of the evening horizon, where the forest, such as it was, terminated the prospect. He travelled on horseback—the prevailing and preferable mode, in that region, where bad roads and crazy vehicles make every other not merely precarious but hazardous. The animal he rode might have been considered, even in the south, one of a choice parentage. He was large, broad-chested, and high—trode the earth with the firm pace of an elephant; and, though exhibiting the utmost docility and obedience to the rein, proceeding on his way with as much ease and freedom as if he bore not the slightest burden on his unconscious back. Indeed, he carried but little weight, for a single and small portmanteau contained the wardrobe of the rider. Beyond this he had few incumbrances; and, to those accustomed only to the modes of travel in a more settled and civilized country—with bag and

baggage—the traveller might have appeared—but for a pair of moderately-sized twisted barrels, which we see pocketed on the saddle,—rather as a gentleman of leisure taking his morning ride, than one already far from home and increasing at every step the distance between it and himself. From our privilege we make bold to mention, that, strictly proportioned to their capacities, the last named appurtenances carried each a charge, which might have rendered awkward any interruption; and, it may not be saying too much if we add, that it is not improbable, to this portion of his equipage our traveller was indebted for that security which had heretofore obviated all necessity for their use. They were essentials which might or might not, in that wild region, have been put in requisition; and the prudence of all experience, in that quarter, is seldom found to neglect such companionship.

To proceed in our detail—the personage to whom the reader has just been introduced, was, in appearance, a mere youth. He had, perhaps, seen some twenty summers or thereabouts—certainly, but few more; his person was tall, manly, and symmetrical; his face, not so round as full, presented a perfect oval to the eye; his forehead was broad, high, and intellectual—purely and perfectly white, and shadowed partially by clustering, but not thick ringlets of the deepest brown; his eyes were dark and piercing, but small, and were overhung by large, projecting, and bushy brows, which gave a commanding, and at times, a fierce expression to his countenance; his lips were small but full—most exquisitely rounded, and of a ripe, rich colour. He might have been considered a fine specimen of masculine beauty, but for the smallness of his eyes, which, though quick and speaking, failed to sustain, with due proportion, the otherwise





1. The first part of the document is a list of names and dates.

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3.

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CHAPTER II.

"Your purse is something heavy—quite too much
For a fair youth to carry—we'll relieve you!
Are you ungrateful! Would you then deny us?"

Thus left to himself, the good steed of our traveller set off, without hesitation, and with a free step, that promised, at least, to overcome space hurriedly, if it attained not the desired destination. The rider did not suffer any of his own doubts to mar a progress so confidently begun, and a few minutes carried the twain, horse and man, deeply, as it were, into the very bowels of the forest. The path taken by the steed grew every moment more and more intricate and difficult of access, and, but for the interruption already referred to, it is not impossible that a continued course in the same direction would, in a little time, have brought them to a full stop, from the sheer impregnability of the wood. The close overhanging branches called for continual watchfulness on the part of the rider, and the broken road, the fallen trees, and frequent brush interposed so many impediments to the free passage of the steed, that his course, at the outset, rather more rapid than comported with the fatigue of the long day's journey, now sank into a measured walk, from which, on a sudden, and without any cause apparent to his rider, he started with evident alarm; his ears were quickened and erect, his eye was fixed with almost human intelligence upon the close copse that stretched itself in front, and his pace grew more than ever staid and delib-

erate. Our traveller was not unmindful of this behaviour on the part of his good steed. He well knew the capacity for observation, and the power of scenting objects at a distance, possessed by the brute creation over man, and his own senses were accordingly and acutely enlisted in the scrutiny thus begun. The section of the world in which he journeyed was too sparingly supplied with good citizens to render unquestionable all those who might be met in the wild woods; and preparing himself, as he well might, for any encounter and every chance, the youth took the reins once more in hand, and boldly, but slowly, spurred his steed on the path. Still nothing was apparent—he heard no stir in the brushwood, and had there been a movement, the withered bush and broken branch would have furnished some attestation. Half doubting the correctness of his alarm, he spoke to the animal—who still exhibited signs of uneasiness—while patting his neck familiarly,

“Quietly, old Blucher, quietly.”

But Blucher, though with a tread of marked delay and caution, exhibited no disposition to be quiet in the genuine sense of the word. His manner still showed alarm and restiveness; and just at the moment when his rider began to feel some impatience at the dogged watchfulness which he exhibited, a shrill whistle which rung through the forest from the copse in front of him, attested fully the correctness of that sense in the animal which had so far outstripped and excelled his own. He was not left much longer in doubt as to the cause of the interruption. As the horse in his advance went onward into the narrow pathway, now more than ever girdled with thicket, and having a broken ascent upon a hill, the cone of which was of some considerable elevation,

he veered partly round, and, so abruptly, as for an instant to discompose the seat of our traveller, which in ordinary circumstances would scarcely have been the case. The occasion for this alarm was soon understood, as, suddenly emerging from the wood, a man who seemed to have been in waiting abruptly stood before him, and directly on the path he was pursuing. Our traveller, as we have already seen, was not altogether unprepared for hostility. In addition to his pistols, which were well charged and conveniently at hand, we may now add that a weapon, in some cases far more certain, lay concealed in his bosom. The appearance of the stranger was not, however, so decided a manifestation of hostility as to permit of his acting with any haste by the premature use of his defences; and with a degree of coolness somewhat singular perhaps in one so young, he simply observed—

“You alarm my horse, my good sir. Please you to stand from the way.”

“Would you pass free of toll, young stranger, that you tell me stand from the way?” was the reply, and with a manner of marked insolence, which in a moment called the blood hurriedly into the cheek of the youth, while his teeth were suddenly clenched together, as he gazed sternly upon the intruder who thus addressed him in a style so unfamiliar to his ears. The man appeared nothing daunted, however, and met the glance of the traveller with a corresponding haughtiness. He wore an air of the most composed indifference, not to say contempt, and resolutely maintained the position in which he had first placed himself. Still it did not seem, from appearances, that his designs were altogether hostile. He wore no arms—none at least which met the sight. His person was small, and his limbs slight, yet affording no promise

of much activity; his face was not ill-favoured, though a quick, piercing black eye shot forth glances of a malignant description, which spoke the spirit within more distinctly than even his outward manner. His nose was long but not sharp, and totally fleshless; the skin being drawn with much tenacity so closely to the bones of the member, as to occasion some apprehension of their finding their way at length through the much tried restraints upon them; his beard had been untrimmed apparently for many days, and a huge pair of whiskers, that did not well accord with the diminutive size of the cheeks on which they had taken up their resting-place, completed an outline, not calculated in anywise to inspire in the spectator any large share of either good feeling or respect, and yet not exactly provoking a very strong sensation of doubt or dislike. Our traveller felt at once the difficulty of deciding upon his pretensions. The untrimmed beard and ill-adjusted whiskers were not so unfrequent in the wild woods as to occasion much suspicion of those who might so wear them; and although the manners of the intruder were rude enough, he was not assured that such manners were not in numberless cases characteristic of persons who evidently meant well. Thus doubting and deliberating, the youth determined, while maintaining a due degree of circumspection, to see farther into the designs of his new acquaintance, before taking any decisive step himself. He now proceeded to reply to the speech, the manner rather than the matter of which, had been so offensive to him.

“ You ask toll of me—may I know for what I must pay this toll, and who are you that require it ? ”

“ I can better ask than answer questions, young
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sir—my education, in the latter respect, having been most wofully neglected in my boyhood.”

“Ay, and in some other respects not less important,” retorted the youth, “if I am to judge from certain points in your bearing. But you mistake your man, my very good sir. You shall play no pranks with me, and unless you speak respectfully, our parley must have as short a life, as, I take it, our acquaintance will have.”

“It would scarcely be polite to contradict so promising a gentleman as yourself,” was the response; “but I am disposed to believe our intimacy likely to lengthen, rather than diminish. I hate to part over-soon with company that talks so well, particularly in these woods, where, unless such a chance come about as the present, the lungs of the heartiest youth in the land would not be often apt to find the echo they seek, though they cried for it at the uttermost pitch of the pipe.”

The look and the language of the speaker were alike significant, and the sinister meaning of the last sentence did not escape the notice of our hero. His reply was calm, however, and his mind perfectly at ease and collected.

“You are pleased to be eloquent, worthy sir—and, on any other occasion, I might not be unwilling to bestow my ear upon you; but as I have yet to find my way out of this labyrinth, for the use of which your facetiousness would have me pay a tax, I must forego that satisfaction, and leave the enjoyment for some better day.”

“You are well bred, I see, young sir,” was the reply, “and this forms an additional reason why I should not desire so soon to break our acquaintance. If you have mistaken your road, what do you on this—why are you in this part of the country,

which is many miles removed from any public thoroughfare?"

"By what right do you ask this question?" was the hurried and unhesitating response of the person so addressed. "You are impertinent!"

"Softly, softly, young sir. Be not rash, and let me recommend that you be more choice in the adoption of your epithets. Impertinent is an ugly word between gentlemen of our habit. Touching my right to ask this or that question of young men who lose the way, that's neither here nor there, and is important in no way. But, I take it, I shall have some right in this matter, seeing, young sir, that you are upon the turnpike, and I am the gate-keeper who must take the toll."

A sarcastic smile passed over the lips of the man as he uttered the sentence, which was as suddenly succeeded, however, by an expression of gravity, partaking of an air of the profoundest business. The traveller surveyed him for a moment before he replied, as if to ascertain in what point of view properly to understand his conduct.

"Turnpike! this is something new. I never heard of a turnpike road and a gate for toll, in a part of the world in which men, or honest ones at least, are not yet commonly to be found; and you think rather too lightly, my good sir, of my claim to that most vulgar commodity called common sense, if you suppose me capable of swallowing this silly story."

"Oh, doubtless—you are a very sagacious young man, I make no question," said the other, with a sneer—"but you will have to pay the turnpike for all that."

"You speak confidently on this point; but, if I am to pay this turnpike, at least, I may be permitted to know who is its proprietor."

"To be sure you may. I am always well pleased to satisfy the doubts and curiosity of young travellers who go abroad for information. I take you to be one of this class."

"Confine yourself, if you please, to the matter in hand, sir—I grow weary of this chat," said the youth, with a haughty inclination, that seemed to have its effect even upon him with whom he spoke.

"Your question is quickly answered. You cannot but have heard of the Pony Club—have you not?"

"I must confess my utter ignorance of such an institution. I have never heard even the name before."

"You have not—then really it is high time to begin the work of enlightenment. You must know, then, that the Pony Club is the proprietor of every thing and every body, throughout the nation, and in and about this section. It is the king, without let or limitation of powers, for sixty miles around. Scarce a man in Georgia but pays in some sort to its support—and judge and jury alike contribute to its treasuries. Few dispute its authority, as you will have reason to discover, without suffering condign and certain punishment; and, unlike the tributaries and agents of other powers, its servitors, like myself, invested with jurisdiction over certain parts and interests, sleep not in the performance of our duties; but, day and night, obey its dictates, and perform the various, always laborious, and sometimes dangerous functions which it imposes upon us. It finds us in men, in money, in horses. It assesses the Cherokees, and they yield a tithe, and sometimes a greater proportion, of their ponies in obedience to its requisitions. Hence indeed the name of the club. It relieves young travellers,

like yourself, of their small change—their six-pences ; and when they happen to have a good patent lever, such an one as, it appears to me, a smart young gentleman like yourself is very apt to carry about with him, it is not scrupulous, but helps them of that too, merely by way of *pas-time*.” And the ruffian chuckled in a half-covert manner at his own pun.

“Truly, a well-conceived sort of sovereignty, and doubtless, sufficiently well served, if I may infer from the representative before me. You must do a large business in this way, most worthy sir.”

“Why, that we do, and your remark reminds me that I have quite as little time to lose as yourself. You now understand, young sir, the toll you have to pay, and the proprietor who claims it.”

“Perfectly—perfectly. You will not suppose me dull again, most candid keeper of the Pony Turnpike. But have you made up your mind, in earnest, to relieve me of such trifling incumbrances as those you have just mentioned.”

“I should be strangely neglectful of the duties of my station, not to speak of the discourtesy of such a neglect to yourself, were I to do otherwise ; always supposing that you were burdened with such incumbrances. I put it to yourself, whether such would not be the effect of my omission.”

“It most certainly would, thou most frank and candid of all the outlaws. Your punctiliousness on this point of honour entitles you, in my mind, to an elevation above and beyond all others of your profession. I admire the grace of your manner, in the commission of acts which the more tame and temperate of our kind are apt to look upon as irregular and unlovely. You, I see, have the true notion of the thing.”

The ruffian looked with some doubt upon the youth—inquiringly, as if to account in some way for the singular coolness, not to say sarcastic bitterness of his replies and manner. There was something, too, of a searching malignity in his glance, that seemed to recognise in his survey, features which brought into activity a personal emotion in his own bosom, not at variance, indeed, with the craft he was pursuing, but fully above and utterly beyond it. Dismissing, however, the expression, he continued in the manner and tone so tacitly adopted between them,

“I am heartily glad, most travelled young gentleman, that your opinion so completely coincides with my own, since it assures me I shall not be compelled, as is sometimes the case in the performance of my duties, to offer any rudeness to one seemingly so well taught as yourself. Knowing the relationship between us so fully, you can have no reasonable objection to conform quietly to all my requisitions, and yield the toll-keeper his dues.”

Our traveller had been long aware of the kind of relationship between himself and his companion; but, relying on his defences, and perhaps, somewhat too much on his own personal capacities of defence; and, possibly, something curious to see how far the love of speech in his assailant might carry him in a dialogue of so artificial a character, he forbore as yet a resort to violence. He found it excessively difficult, however, to account for the strange nature of the transaction so far as it had gone; and the language of the knight of the road seemed so inconsistent with his pursuit, that, at intervals, he was almost led to doubt whether the whole was not the clever jest of some country sportsman, who, in the form of a levier of contributions upon the traveller, would make an acquaint-

ance, such as are frequent in the south, and terminating usually in a ride to a neighbouring plantation, and pleasant accommodations as long as the stranger might think proper to avail himself of them. If, on the other hand, he was in reality the ruffian he represented himself, he knew not how to account for his delay in the assault—a delay, to the youth's mind, without an object—unless attributable to a temper of mind like Robin Hood, and coupled in the person before him as in that of the renowned king of the outlaws, with a peculiar freedom and generosity of habit, and a gallantry and adroitness which, in a different field, had made him a knight worthy to follow and fight for Baldwin and the Holy Cross. Our hero was a *romanticist*, and all of these notions came severally into his thoughts. Whatever might have been the motives of conduct in the robber who thus audaciously announced himself the member of a club notorious on the frontiers of Georgia and among the Cherokees for its daring outlawries, our hero determined to keep up the game so long as it continued such. After a brief pause, he replied to the above politely-expressed demand in the following language :

“ Your request, most unequivocal sir, would seem but reasonable ; and so considering it at the outset, I bestowed due reflection upon it. Unhappily, however, for the Pony Club and its worthy representative, I am quite too poorly provided with worldly wealth at this moment to part with much of it. A few shillings to procure you a cravat—such a one as you may get of Kentucky manufacture—I should not object to. Beyond this, however (and the difficulty grieves me sorely), I am so perfectly incapacitated from doing any thing, that I am almost persuaded, in order to the bettering of my condition, to pay the customary fees, and

applying to your honourable body for the privilege of membership, procure those resources of a large generosity which my necessity, and not my want, prevents me from bestowing upon you."

"A very pretty idea, young master," returned he of the road; "and under such circumstances your jest about the cravat from Kentucky is no means wanting in proper application. But the fact is, our numbers are just now complete—ranks are full—and the candidates for the honor are so numerous as to leave little chance for an applicant. You might be compelled to wait for a long season, unless the Georgia Penitent and Georgia Guard, which, by-the-way, are slow at such things, in order to the due promotion of your wishes, shall create a vacancy in your behalf."

"Truly, the matter is of very serious regard with an air of much solemnity, replied the youth who seemed admirably to have caught up the spirit of the dialogue,—“and it grieves me the more to know, that, under this view of the case, I can do no more to satisfy you than I can serve myself. I am quite unlucky that your influence is insufficient to procure me admission into your fraternity; since it is impossible that I should pay the turnpike, while the club itself, by refusing me membership, will not permit me to acquire the means of doing so. I am, most worthy sir, as the woods grow more and more dull and dark, and as I may have to ride for a supper, I am constrained, however unwilling to leave good company, to bid you a fair even and a long swing of fortune, most worthy knight of the highway, and ~~trusty~~ representative of the Pony Club."

With these words, the youth, gathering up the bridle of the horse, and slightly touching him with

the rowel, would have proceeded on his course, but the position of the outlaw underwent a corresponding change, and, grasping the rein of the animal, he arrested his farther progress.

"I am less willing to separate than yourself from good company, gentle youth, as you may perceive; since I so carefully restrain you from a ride over a road so perilous as this. You have spoken like a fair and able scholar this afternoon; and talents, such as you possess, come too seldom into our forests to suffer them, after so brief a sample, to leave us so abruptly. You must come to terms with the turnpike."

"Take your hands from my horse, sirrah!" was the only response made by the youth; his tone and manner changing with the corresponding change in the situation of the parties. "I would not do you a harm willingly; for I want no man's blood on my head, however well he may deserve his fate. My pistols too, let me assure you, are much more readily come at than my purse. Tempt me not to the use of them; but stand from the way."

"It may not be," replied the robber, with a composure and coolness that underwent no change; "your threats affect me not. I have not taken my place here without a perfect knowledge of all its dangers and consequences. You had better come peaceably to terms; for, were it even the case that you could escape me, which is very unlikely, you have only to cast your eye up the path before you, to be assured of the utter impossibility of escaping those who aid me. The same glance will also show you the toll-gate, which you could not see before. Look ahead, young sir, and be wise in time; and let me perform my duties without hinderance."

Casting a furtive glance on the point indicated

ticability of his pausing for their removal; and, in the spirit which had heretofore marked his conduct, he determined upon the most daring endeavour. Throwing off all restraint from his steed, and fixing himself firmly in the stirrup and saddle, he plunged onwards to the leap, and to the chagrin of the pursuers, who had relied much upon the obstruction, and who now appeared in sight, the noble animal, without a moment's reluctance, cleared it handsomely. Another volley of pistol shot rung in the ears of the youth, as he passed the impediment, and he felt himself wounded in the side. The wound gave him little concern at the moment, for under the excitement of the strife, he felt not even its smart; and turning himself upon the saddle, he drew one of his own trusty weapons from its case, and discharging it, by way of taunt, in the faces of the outlaws, laughed aloud with the exulting spirit of youth at the successful result of an adventure, due entirely to his own perfect coolness, and the warm courage which had been his predominating feature from childhood. The incident just narrated had dispersed a crowd of gloomy reflections, so that the darkness which now overspread the scene, coupled as it was with the cheerlessness of prospect before him, had but little influence upon his spirits. Still, ignorant of his course, and beginning to be enfeebled by the loss of blood, he moderated the speed of the noble animal whose sagacity, not less than prowess, had done so much towards his master's extrication, and gave up to him the choice of direction. He did not, however, relax so greatly in his progress as to permit of his being overtaken by the desperates whom he had foiled. He knew the danger and hopelessness of a second encounter with men sufficiently odious, in common report, to make him

doubly cautious, after the adventure so nearly fatal. Exiled from society, after having acquired a large taste for many of its enjoyments, they found in the frontier impunity for those crimes and offences, for the punishment of which it had imposed ineffectual and defrauded penalties; and conscious of no responsibility to divine or human laws, a vindictive exacerbation of spirit, the result of their tacit outlawry, had prompted them to retort upon men the stern severities of justice. Without restraining his good steed, therefore, our young traveller simply gauged his speed to his capacities, as he entered upon a road which, in the dim twilight, had something of the appearance of that from which he had in the first instance so erringly departed. He had not much time, however, for observation, when a numbness seized upon his frame, a strange sickness came over his heart, and his grasp losing all further tenacity, he fell from his horse without an effort upon the long grass, in utter unconsciousness.

CHAPTER III.

“And thus they grew apace, and thus they loved—
 How should they else, with every thought alike,
 And each emotion? springing, too, at once,
 As at a birth, their two hearts knit in one
 And grew together; so, from parted stems,
 Two trees will link in air their kindred arms,
 And have but one life thence for evermore.”

Not to go back too greatly in our narrative, we change our ground; and leaving our youth traveller upon the greensward, as the night gathered over him, let us endeavour to make the reader somewhat better acquainted with the history upon which we have commenced, and of the motive that adventurous journey which we have been thus rudely interrupted.

Ralph Colleton, the youth already described, was the only son of a Carolinian of the same name originally of fine fortune, but who, from circumstances, had been compelled to fly from the place of his nativity; an adventurer, struggling with proud mind and a thousand difficulties, in the less known but more productive regions of Tennessee. Born to wealth, seemingly adequate to all reasonable desires, a fine plantation, numerous slaves, and the host of friends who necessarily come with such a condition, his individual improvident, thoughtless extravagance, and lavish mode of life—a habit not uncommon in the South,—had rendered it necessary, at the age of fifty, when the mind, rather than the body, requires repose rather than a

venture, that he should emigrate from the place of his birth ; and with resources diminished to an existence almost nominal, break ground once more in unknown forests, and commence the toils and troubles of life anew. With an only son (the youth before us) then a mere boy, and no other family, Colonel Ralph Colleton did not hesitate at such an exile. He had found out the worthlessness of men's professions at a period not very remote from the general knowledge of his loss of fortune : and having no other connexion claiming from him either countenance or support, and but a single relative from whom separation might be painful, he felt, comparatively speaking, but few of the privations usually following such a removal. An elder brother, like himself a widower, with a single child, a daughter, formed the whole of his kindred left behind him in Carolina ; and, as between the two brothers there existed, at all times, some leading dissimilar points of disposition and character, an occasional correspondence, due rather to form than to affection, served all necessary purposes in keeping up the sentiment of kindred in their bosoms. There were but few real affinities which could bring them together. They never could altogether understand, and certainly had but a limited desire to appreciate or to approve many of the several and distinct habits of one another, and thus they separated with but few sentiments of genuine concern. William Colleton, the elder brother, was the proprietor of several thousand highly valuable and pleasantly situated acres, upon the waters of the Santee—a river which irrigates a region in the state of South Carolina, notorious for its wealth, lofty pride, polished manners, and noble and considerate hospitality. Affluent equally with his younger brother by descent, marriage had still

further contributed towards the growth of possessions, which a prudent management had always kept entire and always improving. Such was the condition of William Colleton, the uncle of the young Ralph, then a mere child, when he was taken by his father into Tennessee.

There the fortune of the adventurer still maintained its ancient aspect. He had bought lands, and engaged in trade, and made sundry efforts in various and honourable ways, but without success. Vocation after vocation had a common and certain termination, and after many years of profitless experiment, the ways of prosperity were as far remote from his knowledge and as perplexing to his pursuit, as at the first hour of his adventure. In worldly concerns he stood just where he started fifteen years before, with this difference for the worse, however, that he had grown older in this scope of time, less equal to the tasks of adventure, and with the moral energies checked as they had been by continual disappointments, recoiling in despondency and gloom with trying emphasis upon a spirit otherwise noble and sufficiently daring for every legitimate and not unwonted species of trial and occasion. Still he had learned little, beyond *hauteur* and querulousness, from the lessons of experience. Economy was not more the inmate of his dwelling than when he was blessed with the large income of his birthright; but, extravagantly generous as ever, his house was the abiding-place of a most lavish and unwise hospitality.

His brother, William Colleton, on the other hand, with means hourly increasing, exhibited a disposition narrowing at times into a selfishness the most pitiful. He did not, it is true, forego or forget any of those habits of freedom and intercourse in his household and with those about him, which

forms so large a peculiarity among the people of the south. He could give a dinner, and furnish an ostentatious entertainment—lodge his guest in the style of a prince for weeks together, nor exhibit a feature likely to induce a thought of intrusion in the mind of his inmate. In public, the populace had no complaints to urge of his penuriousness; and in all outward shows he manifested the same general features which marked the habit of the class to which he belonged. But his selfishness lay in things not so much on the surface. It was more deep and abiding in its character; and consisted in the false estimate which he made of the things around him. He had learned to value wealth as a substitute for mind, for morals—for all that is lofty, and all that should be leading, in the consideration of society. He valued few things beside. He had different emotions for the rich from those which he entertained for the poor; and from perceiving that among men, money could usurp all places—could defeat virtue, command respect denied to morality and truth, and secure a real worship, when the deity must be content with shows and symbols—he gradually gave it the place in his regard, which petrified the genuine feeling. He valued it not for itself, and not with any disposition simply to procure and to increase the quantities in his possession. He was by no means a miser or a mercenary, and his regards were given to it as the visible embodiment of power little less than divine. He was, in short, that worst of all possible pretenders, the exclusive, the aristocrat, on the score of his property.

In one respect, however,—and this had somewhat created or revived the sympathies of boyhood between them—the fortunes of the two brothers had been by no means dissimilar. After a pleasant

union of a few years, they had lost their respective wives ; a single child preserving for each a miniature and beloved likeness of the parents whom, though representing, they had never known. A son, to the younger brother, had concentrated the affections of that exile, whose chief sorrows on the subject of his declining fortunes and fruitless endeavours, grew entirely out of those thoughts about the future which every look upon his boy was calculated to provoke ; while, to William Colleton, the elder, the young and beautiful Edith, a few months older than her cousin Ralph, repaired greatly the absence of her mother, and neutralized in part, if in some respects she did not subdue, some few of the less favourable features in the character of the father.

Separated by several hundred miles of uncultivated and seldom travelled forest, the brothers did not frequently see one another ; but they corresponded, and when Ralph was fifteen, a sudden humour of amiability on the part of his uncle, with a reluctant consent wrung with great difficulty from his father, transferred the youth, with the view to his education, to the control and direction of his uncle. The two cousins met in Georgia for the first time, and after a brief journey together in the more populous parts of that large, though at that period, sparsely settled state, Ralph was despatched to College.

The separation of the son from the father, however beneficial to the former in some respects, was fatal to the latter. The privation added to his sufferings, and his defeats of fortune received additional influence and exaggerated sting from the solitude following his departure. He had anticipated this result ; and it was only when his brother, with a more earnest appeal to his fraternal regard

than he had been capable for many long years of making, urged him not to defeat by a weak selfishness the parental plan which he had formed for the benefit of the youth, that he consented to the sacrifice. The charge of selfishness brought about his resolve, and his noble heart determined to suffer in silence for the good of his son. He no longer withheld his consent, and attending the youth to Georgia where his brother had engaged to meet him, he delivered him to his uncle, and after some days' pause, he parted with, never again to behold, him. A few months only had elapsed, when the intelligence of his death was received by the orphan and highly-sensitive boy. He died, like many similar spirits, of no known disorder.

From fifteen to nineteen is no very long leap in the history of youth. We will make it now, and place the young Ralph—now something older, returned from college, finely formed, intellectual, handsome, vivacious, manly, spirited, and susceptible, as such a person should be—once again in close intimacy with his beautiful cousin. The season which had done so much for him, had been no less liberal with her; and we now survey her, the expanding flower, all bloom and fragrance, a tribute of the waning spring, in the bosom of the more forward summer.

Ralph came from college to his uncle's domicile, now his only home. The circumstances of his father's fate and fortune, continually acting upon his mind and sensibilities from boyhood, had made his character a marked and singular one,—proud, jealous, and sensitive to an extreme which was painful not merely to himself, but at times to others. But he was noble, lofty, sincere, without a touch of meanness in his composition, above circumlocution, with a simplicity of character strikingly

great, but without any thing like puerility or weakness.

The children,—for such, in reference to their experience, we may almost call them—had learned to recognise in the progress of a few seasons but a single existence. Ralph looked only for Edith, and cared nothing for other sunlight; while Edith, with scarcely less reserve than her bolder companion, had speech and thought for few besides Ralph. Circumstances contributed not a little to what would appear the natural growth of this mutual dependance. They were perpetually left together, and without many of those tacit and readily understood restraints, unavoidably accompanying the presence of others older than themselves. Residing, save at few brief intervals, at the plantation of Col. Colleton, they saw little and knew less of society; and the worthy colonel, not less ambitious than proud, having become a politician, had still further added to those opportunities of intimacy which had now become so important to them both. Half of his time was taken up in public matters. A leader of his party in the section of country in which he lived, he was always busy in the responsibilities imposed upon him by such a station; and what with canvassing at election-polls, and muster-grounds, and dancing attendance as a silent voter at the halls of the state legislature, to the membership of which his constituents had returned him, he saw but little of his family, and they almost as little of him. His influence grew unimportant with his wards, in proportion as it obtained vigour with his faction—was seldom referred to by them, and, perhaps, such was the rapid growth of their affections, would have been but little regarded. He appeared to take it for granted, that having provided them with all the necessities called for by

life, he had done quite enough for the benefit of its members; and actually gave far less of his consideration to his own and only child than he did to his plantation, and the success of a party measure, involving possibly the office of door-keeper to the house, or of tax-collector to the district. The taste for domestic life, which at one period might have been held with him exclusive, had been entirely swallowed up and forgotten in his public relations; and entirely overlooking the fact, that in the silent goings-on of time, the infantile will cease to be so, he saw not that the children he had brought together but a few years before might not with reason be considered children any longer. Children indeed! What years had they not lived—what volumes of experience in human affections and feelings had the influence and genial warmth of a Carolina sun not unfolded to their spirits in the few sweet and uninterrupted seasons of their intercourse. How imperious were the dictates of that nature, to whose immethodical but honest teachings they had been almost entirely given up. They lived together, walked together, rode together—read in the same books, conned the same lessons, studied the same prospects, saw life through the common medium of mutual associations; and lived happy, only in the sweet unison of emotions, gathered at a common fountain, and equally dear, and equally necessary to them both. And this is love—they loved!

They loved, but the discovery was yet to be made by them. Living in its purest luxuries, in the perpetual communion of the only one necessary object—having no desire and as little prospect of change—ignorant of and altogether unlessoned by the vicissitudes of life—enjoying the sweet association which had been the parent of that passion, dependant now entirely upon its continuance—

she laid her hand upon his arm, while her eyes, full of the liveliest interest, yet moistened with a tearful apprehension, were fixed earnestly upon his own.

"It is a foolish book, a very foolish book—a story of false sentiment, and of mock and artificial feelings, of which I know, and care to know, nothing. But it has told me much that I feel is true, and that chimes with my own experience. It has told me much that, as it is true, I am glad to have been taught. Hear me then, dear Edith, and smile not carelessly at my words, for I have now learned to tremble when I speak to you, in fear lest I should offend you."

She would have spoken words of assurance—she would have taught him to think better of her affections and their strength; but his impetuosity checked her in her speech.

"I know what you would say, and my heart thanks you for it, as if its very life had depended upon the utterance. You would tell me to have no such fear; but the fear is a portion of myself now—it is my heart itself. Hear me then, Edith,—my Edith, if you will so let me name you."

Her hand rested on his assuringly, with a gentle pressure. He continued—

"Hitherto we have lived with each other, only with each other—we have loved each other, and I have almost only loved you. Neither of us, Edith (may I believe it of you?) have known much of any other affection. But how long is this to last? that book—where is it? but no matter—it has taught me, that now, when a few months will carry us both into the world, it is improper that our relationship should continue. It says we cannot be the children any longer that we have been—that such in-

tercourse, I can now perceive why, would be injurious to you. Do you understand me?"

The blush of a first consciousness came over the cheek of the maiden as she withdrew her hand from his passionate clasp.

"Ah! I see already," he exclaimed: "you too have learned the lesson. And is it thus—and we are happy no longer!"

"Ralph!"—she endeavoured to speak, but could proceed no further, and her hand was again, silently and without objection, taken into the grasp of his. The youth, after a brief pause, in a tone which though it had lost much of its impetuosity, was yet full of stern resolve, proceeded,

"Hear me, Edith—but a word—a single word. I love you—believe me, my sweet Edith, I love you."

The effect of this declaration was scarcely such as the youth had desired. She had been so much accustomed to his warm admiration, indicated frequently in phrases such as these, that it had the effect of restoring to her much of that self-possession, of which the nature of the previous dialogue had not a little deprived her; and in the most natural manner in the world, she replied—perhaps too, we may add, with much of the artlessness of art—"Why, to be sure you do, cousin Ralph,—it would be something strange indeed if you did not. I believe you love me, as I am sure you can never doubt how much you are beloved by me!"

"*Cousin Ralph—Cousin Ralph!*" exclaimed the youth with something of his former impetuosity, emphasizing ironically as he spoke the unfortunate family epithet—"Ah, Edith, you will not understand me—nor indeed, an hour ago, should I altogether have understood myself. Suddenly, dear Edith, however, as I read the passages of that

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back, the thought darted through my brain like lightning, and I saw into my own heart, as I had never been permitted to see into it before. I there saw how much I loved you—not as my cousin—not as my sister, as you sometimes would have me call you, but as I will not call you again—but as—as—”

“As what?”

“As my wife—Edith—as my own, own wife!” He clasped her hand in his, while his head sank, and his lips were pressed upon the taper and trembling fingers which grew cold and powerless in his grasp.

What a volume was at that moment opened, for the first time, before the gaze and understanding of the half-affrighted and deep-throbbing heart of that gentle girl. The veil which had concealed its burning mysteries was torn away in that instant. The key to its secret places was in her hands, and she was bewildered with her own discoveries. Her cheeks alternated between the pale and crimson of doubt and hope. Her lips quivered convulsively, and an unbidden but not painful suffusion overspread the warm brilliance of her deep blue eye. She strove, ineffectually, to speak; her words came forth in broken murmurs; her voice had sunk into a sigh; she was dumb. The youth once more took her hand into his, as, speaking with a suppressed tone, and with a measured slowness which had something in it of extreme melancholy, he broke silence:—

“And have I no answer, Edith—and must I believe that for either of us there should be other loves than those of childhood—that new affections may usurp the place of old ones—that there may come a time, dear Edith, when I shall see an arm, not my own, about your waist, and the eyes that would look on no prospect if you were not a part

of it, may be doomed to that fearfulest blight of beholding your lips smiling and pressed beneath the lips of another?"

"Never, oh never, Ralph; speak no more, I beseech you, in such language. You do me wrong in this—I have not thought of this—I shall not think of it—I will be yours, and yours only, Ralph—yours only as you have ever known me."

She spoke with a sweet and life-giving energy; her head, from which the light brown hair streamed down in profuse volumes, was settled upon his shoulder—his arms encircled her waist; and his lips rested passionately upon her burning cheek, when a third party entered the room in the person of Colonel Colleton.

CHAPTER IV.

"You have done wrong and should be rated, sir—
Look to it—for the punishment's at hand,
When you do err again."

"He shall not bear it thus so loftily—
He is no lord of mine—I am no slave,
To wait and watch his nod, to bend the knee,
And bide reproof, and seek applause from him,
And fetch and carry in his service thus!"

THE glance of Colonel Colleton indicated no small astonishment. He was now for the first time made conscious of the rapid progress of events, and the effects which a few comprehensive years had had upon his household. His daughter, at that moment, seemed much taller than he had ever before seen her; and, as with a stern expression, his eye settled upon the fine and speaking features of Ralph,

gotten that you are yet but a mere boy. You forget your years and mine."

"No, sir—pardon me when I so speak—but it is you who have forgotten them. Was it well to speak as you have spoken?" proudly replied the youth.

"Ralph, you have forgotten much, or have yet to be taught many things. You may not have violated confidence, but—"

"*I have not violated confidence!*" was the abrupt and somewhat impetuous response, "and will not have it spoken of in that manner. It is not true that I have abused any trust, and the assertion which I make shall not therefore be understood as a mere possibility."

The uncle was something astounded by the almost fierce manner of his nephew; but the only other effect of this expression was simply, while it diminished his own testiness of manner in his speeches, to add something to the severity of their character. He knew the indomitable spirit of the youth, and his pride was enlisted in the desire for its overthrow.

"You are yet to learn, Ralph Colleton, I perceive, the difference and distance between yourself and my daughter. You are but a youth, yet—quite too young to think of such ties as those of marriage, and to make any lasting engagement of that nature; but even were this not the case, I am entirely ignorant of those pretensions which should prompt your claim to the hand of Edith."

Had Colonel Colleton been a prudent and reflective man—had he, indeed, known much, if any thing, of human nature, he would have withheld the latter part of this sentence. He must have seen that its effect would only irritate a spirit needing an emollient. The reply was instantaneous.

"My pretensions, Colonel Colleton? You have twice uttered that word in my ears, and with reference to this subject—let me understand you. If you would teach me by this sentence the immeasurable individual superiority of Edith over myself, in all things, whether of mind, or heart, or person, the lesson is gratuitous—I need no teacher to this end. I acknowledge its truth, and none on this point can more perfectly agree with you than myself. But if, looking beyond these particulars, you would have me recognise in myself an inferiority marked and singular, in a fair comparison with other men—if, in short, you would convey an indignity; and—but you are my father's brother, sir!" and the blood mounting to his forehead, and his heart swelling, the youth turned proudly away, and rested his head upon the mantel.

"Not so, Ralph; you are hasty in your thought, not less than in its expression;" said his uncle, soothingly. "I meant not what you think. But you must be aware, nephew, that my daughter, not less from the fortune which will be exclusively hers, and her individual accomplishments, than from the leading political station which her father fills, will be enabled to have a choice in the adoption of a suitor, which this childish passion might defeat."

"Mine is no childish passion, sir; though young, my mind is not apt to vary in its tendencies; and, unlike that of the mere politician, has little of inconsistency in its predilections with which to rebuke itself. But, I understand you. You have spoken of her fortune, and that reminds me that I had a father, not less worthy, I am sure—not less generous, I feel—but certainly far less prudent than hers. I understand you, sir, perfectly."

"If you mean, Ralph, by this sarcasm, that my considerations are those of wealth, you mistake me

much. The man who seeks my daughter must not look for a sacrifice; she must win a husband who has a name, a high place—who has a standing in society. Your tutors, indeed, speak of you in fair terms; but the public voice is every thing in our country. When you have got through your law studies, and made your first speech, we will talk once more upon this subject."

"And when I have obtained admission to the practice of the law, do you say that Edith shall be mine?"

"Nay, Ralph, you again mistake me; I only say, it will be then time enough to consider the matter."

"Uncle, this will not do for me. Either you sanction, or you do not. You mean something by that word pretensions which I am yet to understand; my name is Colleton, like your own,—and—"

There was a stern resolve in the countenance of the colonel, which spoke of something of the same temper with his impetuous nephew, and the cool and haughty sentence which fell from his lips in reply, while arresting that of the youth, was galling to the proud spirit of the latter, whom it chafed nearly into madness.

"Why, true, Ralph, such is your name indeed; and your reference to this subject now, only reminds me of the too free use which my brother made of it when he bestowed it upon a woman so far beneath him and his family in all possible respects."

"There again, sir, there again! It is my mother's poverty that pains you. She brought my father no dowry. He had nothing of that choice prudence which seems to have been the guide of others of our family in the bestowment of their affections. He did not calculate the value of his wife's income

before he suffered himself to become enamoured of her. I see it, sir—I am not ignorant.”

“If I speak with you calmly, Ralph, it is because you are the indweller of my house, and because I have a pledge to my brother in your behalf.”

“Speak freely, sir, let not this scruple trouble you any longer. It shall not trouble me; and I shall be careful to take early occasion to release you most effectually from all such pledges.”

Colonel Colleton proceeded as if the last speech had not been uttered.

“Edith has a claim in society which shall not be sacrificed. Her father, Ralph, did not descend to the hovel of the miserable peasant, choosing a wife from the inferior grade, who, without education, and ignorant of all refinement, could only appear a blot upon the station to which she had been raised. Her mother, sir, was not a woman obscure and uneducated, for whom no parents could be found.”

“What means all this, sir? Speak, relieve me at once, Colonel Colleton. What know you of my mother?”

“Nothing—but quite as much as your father ever knew. It is sufficient that he found her in a hovel, without a name, and with the silly romance of his character through life, he raised her to a position in society which she could not fill to his honour, and which, finally, working upon his pride and sensibility, drove him into those extravagancies which in the end produced his ruin. I grant that she loved him with a most perfect devotion, which he too warmly returned, but what of that?—she was still his destroyer.”

Thus sternly did the colonel unveil to the eyes of Ralph Colleton a portion of the family picture which he had never been permitted to survey before.

Cold drops stood on the brow of the now nerveless and unhappy youth. He was pale, and his eyes were fixed for an instant ; but, suddenly recovering himself, he rushed hastily from the apartment before his uncle could interpose to prevent him. He heard not or heeded not the words of entreaty which called him back ; but proceeding at once to his chamber, carefully fastened the entrance, and throwing himself upon his couch, found relief from the deep mental agony thus suddenly brought upon him in a flood of tears.

For the first time in his life, deriving his feeling in this particular rather from the opinions of society than from any individual consciousness of debasement, he yet felt a sentiment of humiliation working in his breast. His mother he had little known, but his father's precepts and familiar conversation had impressed upon him, from his childhood, a feeling for her of the deepest and most unqualified regard. This feeling was not lessened, though rebuked, by the development so unnecessarily and so wantonly conveyed. It taught a new lesson of distrust for his uncle, whose harsh manner and ungenerous insinuations, in the progress of the preceding half-hour, had lost him not a little of the youth's esteem. He felt that the motive of his informer was not less unkind than was the information painful and oppressive ; and his mind, now more than ever excited and active from this thought, went on discussing from point to point all existing relations, until a stern resolve to leave, that very night, the dwelling of one whose hospitality had been made a matter of special reference, was the only and settled conclusion to which his pride could possibly come.

The servant reminded him of the supper-hour, but the summons was utterly disregarded. The

colonel himself condescended to notify the stubborn youth of the same important fact, but with almost as little effect. Without opening his door, he signified his indisposition to join in the usual repast, and thus closed the conference.

"I meet him at the table no more—not at his table, at least," was the muttered speech of Ralph, as he heard the receding footsteps of his uncle.

He had determined, though without any distinct object in view, upon leaving the house and returning to Tennessee where he had hitherto resided. His excited spirits would suffer no delay, and that very night was the period chosen for his departure. Few preparations were necessary. With a fine horse of his own, the gift of his father, he knew that the course lay open. The long route he had more than once travelled before; and he had no fears, though he well knew the desolate character of the journey, in pursuing it alone. Apart from this, he loved adventure for its own sake. The first lesson which his father had taught him, even in boyhood, was that daring of trial which alone can bring about the most perfect manliness. With a stout heart and with limbs not less so, the difficulties before him had no thought in his mind; there was buoyancy enough in the excitement of his spirit at that moment to give even a pleasurable aspect to the difficulties gathering before him.

At an early hour he commenced the work of preparation: he had little trouble in this respect. He studiously selected from his wardrobe such portions of it as had been the gift of his uncle, all of which he carefully excluded from among the contents of the little portmanteau which readily comprised the residue. His travelling-dress was quickly adjusted; and not omitting a fine pair of pistols and a dirk, which may be held in the

south and south-west legitimate companions, he found few cares for other arrangement. One token alone of Edith—a small miniature linked with his own, taken a few seasons before, when both were children, by a strolling artist—suspended by a chain of the richest gold, was carefully hung about his neck. It grew in value, to his mind, at a moment when he was about to separate—perhaps for ever—from its sweet original.

At midnight, when all was silent—his portmantau under his arm—booted, spurred, and ready for travel—Ralph descended to the lower story, in which slept the chief servant of the house. Cæsar was a favourite with the youth, and he had no difficulty in making himself understood. The worthy black was thunderstruck with his determination.

“Ky! Mass Ralph, how you talk! what for you go dis time o’night? What for you go ’t all?”

The youth satisfied him, in a manner as evasive and brief as possible, and urged him in the preparation of his steed for the journey. But the worthy negro absolutely refused to sanction the proceeding unless he were permitted to go along with him. He used not a few strong arguments for this purpose.

“And what we all for do here, when you leff? ’speck ebbery ting be dull, wuss nor ditch-water, Nomore fun—no more shuffle-foot. Old masser no lika de fiddle, and nebber hab party and jollication like udder people. Don’t tink I can stay here, Mass Ralph, after you gone; ’spose you no ’jection I go ’long wid you? You leff me I take de swamp, sure as a gun.”

“No, Cæsar, you are not mine—you belong to your young mistress. You must stay and wait upon her.”

“Ha!” was the quick response of the black,

with a significant smirk upon his lip, and with a cunning emphasis—"enty I see—what for I hab eye if I no see wid em? I 'speck young misses hab no 'jection for go too—eh, Mass Ralph! all you hab for do is for ax em!"

The eye of the youth danced with a playful light, as if a new thought, and not a disagreeable one, had suddenly broken in upon his brain; but the expression lasted but for an instant. He overruled all the hopes and wishes of the sturdy black, who, at length, with a manner the most desponding, proceeded to the performance of the required duty. A few moments sufficed, and with a single look to the window of his mistress, which spoke unseen volumes of love, leaving an explanatory letter for the perusal of father and daughter, though addressed only to the latter—he gave the rough hand of his sable friend a cordial pressure, and was soon hidden from sight by the thickly spreading foliage of the long avenue. It is scarcely necessary to inform the reader, that the youth, whose escape in a preceding chapter we have already narrated, and Ralph Colleton of the present, are one and the same person.

He had set forth, as we have seen, under the excitement of feelings strictly natural; but which, subtracting from the strong common sense belonging to his character, had led him prematurely into an adventure, having no distinct purposes, and promising largely of difficulty. What were his thoughts of the future, what his designs, we are not prepared to say. His character was of a firm and independent kind; and the probability is, that looking to the profession of the law, in the study of which noble science his mind had been for some time occupied, he had contemplated its future practice in those portions of Tennessee in which his

but seeming conscious of some change for the better in his own prospects, he fell again to work upon the herbage as if no interruption had occurred to his repast.

The song of the woodman ceased as he discovered the body. With an exclamation, he stooped down to examine it, and his hands were suffused with the blood which had found its way through the garments. He saw that life was not extinct, and readily understanding the stupor as the consequence of loss of blood rather than of vital injury, he paused a few moments as in seeming meditation, then turning from the master to his unreluctant steed, he threw himself upon his back, and was quickly out of sight. In an hour he returned. He brought with him a wagon and team, such as all farmers possess in that region, and lifting the inanimate form into the rude vehicle with a tender caution that indicated a true humanity, walking slowly beside the horses, and carefully avoiding all such obstructions in the road as by disordering the motion would have given pain to the sufferer, he carried him safely, and after the delay of a few hours, into the frontier, and then almost unknown, village of Chestatee.

It was well for the youth that he had fallen into such hands. There were few persons in that part of the world like Mark Forrester. A better heart, a more honourable spirit lived not; and in spite of an erring and a neglected education—of evil associations, and sometimes evil pursuits—he was still a worthy specimen of manhood. We may as well here describe him, as he appears to us; for at this period the youth was still insensible—unconscious of his deliverance as he was of his deliverer.

Mark Forrester was a stout, strongly built, yet

active person, some six feet in height, square and broad-shouldered—exhibiting an outline, wanting, perhaps, in some of the more rounded and taking graces of form and figure, yet at the same time far from any indication of symmetrical deficiency. There was also not a little of ease and agility, together with a rude gracefulness in his action, the result less of the well-combined organization of his animal man than of the hardy habits of his woodland course of life. His appearance was youthful, and the passing glance would perhaps have rated him at little more than six or seven-and-twenty. His broad full chest heaving strongly with a consciousness of might—together with the generally athletic muscularity of his whole person, indicated correctly the possession of prodigious strength. His face was finely southern—it wanted the calculating lines of cunning,—that false presentiment of wisdom, fatal to honesty, which so many, mistaking for the true object, fall down and worship. His features were frank and fearless—moderately intelligent, and well-marked—the *tout ensemble* indicating an active vitality, strong, and usually just feelings, and a good-natured familiarity of character, which enlisted confidence, and seemed likely to acknowledge few restraints of merely conventional creation. Nor, in any of these particulars, did the outward falsely interpret the inward man. With the possession of a giant's powers, he was seldom so far borne forward by his impulses, whether of pride or of passion, as to permit of their wanton or improper use. His eye, too, had a not unpleasing twinkle, promising more of good-fellowship and a heart at ease than may well consort with a less jaundiced or distempered spirit. His garb indicated, in part, and was well adapted to, the pursuits of the hunter and the la-

bours of the woodman—we couple these employments together, for, in the wildernesses of North America, the dense forests, and broad prairies, they are utterly inseparable. In a belt, made of buckskin, which encircled his middle, was stuck, in sheath of the same material, a small axe, such as among the Indians, was well known to the early settlers as a deadly implement of war. The head of this instrument, or that portion of it opposite the blade, and made in weight to correspond with an equal balance the latter when hurled from the hand, was a pick of solid steel, narrowing down to a point and calculated, with a like blow, to prove even more fatal, as a weapon in conflict, than the most legitimate member to which it was appended. A thong of ox-hide, slung over his shoulder, supported easily a light rifle of the choicest bore; for there are few matters indeed upon which the wayfarer in the southern wilds exercises a nicer and more discriminating taste than in the selection of a companion, in a pursuit like his, of the very last importance; and which, in time, he learns to love with a passion almost comparable to the love of a woman. The dress of the woodman was composed of a coarse gray stuff, of a make sufficiently *outré* to the eye taught in the nice sinuosities of the city fashions, but which, fitting him snugly, served to set off his robust and well-made person to the utmost advantage. A cap of the fox-skin, of domestic manufacture, the tail of which, studiously preserved, obviated any necessity for a foreign tassel, rested slightly upon his head, giving a unique finish to his appearance, which a fashionable hat would never have supplied. It accorded happily with the scenes and circumstances of his condition, and the forest employ which he so vigorously pursued. Such, to the eye, was the person

oy, age, who, so fortunately for our hero, plied his craft
 outh in that fearful region; and who, stumbling upon
 hey his insensible form at nightfall, as already narrated,
 ick- carefully conveyed him to his own lodgings at the
 in a village inn of Chestatee.

as, The town of Chestatee—for such it was in the
 arly acceptation of the time and country,—may well
 read deserve some little description; not for its own
 the sake and intrinsic importance, but because it will
 and be found to resemble some ten out of every dozen
 was of the country towns in all the corresponding
 int, region. It consisted of thirty or forty dwellings,
 ven chiefly of log construction; not, however, so im-
 ore mediately in the vicinity of one another as to give
 A any very decided air of regularity and order to
 ted their appearance. As usual, in all the interior set-
 ere tlements of the South and West, wherever an
 rer eligible situation presented itself, the squatter laid
 ore the foundation logs of his dwelling, and proceeded
 m- to its erection. No public squares, and streets laid
 m- out by line and rule, marked the conventional pro-
 ve gress of an orderly and methodical society; but,
 of regarding individual convenience as the very *re*
 n- *plus ultra* in arrangements of this nature, they took
 y little note of any other, and to them less import-
 e ant, matters. They built where the land rose into
 o a ridge of moderate and gradual elevation, com-
 t- manding a long reach of prospect—where a good
 - spring threw out its crystal waters, jetting, in
 v winter and summer alike, from the hillside or the
 a rock; or, in its absence, where a fair branch,
 a trickling over a bed of small and yellow pebbles,
 - kept up a perpetually clear and undiminishing cur-
 l- rent—where the groves were thick and umbrage-
 s- ous; and lastly, but not less important than either,
 - where agues and fevers came not, bringing clouds
 over the warm sunshine, and taking all the hue, and

beauty, and odour from the flower. These considerations were at all times the most important to the settler when once the place of his abode was fairly determined upon; and with these advantages at large, the company of squatters, of whom our hero's acquaintance, Mark Forester, made one, and one by no means the least important among them, had regularly, for the purposes of gold-digging, colonized the little boundary into which, in company with the reader, we have now ventured to penetrate.

Preliminary to any farther advance in our narrative, it may be quite as well to say, that, as might easily be imagined, the various adventurers of which this wild congregation was made up were impelled to their present common centre by motives and influences as contrariant and manifold as the differing features of their several countenances. They came, not only from all parts of the surrounding country, but many of them from all parts of the surrounding world; oddly and confusedly jumbled together, the very *olla-podrida* of moral and mental combination. They were chiefly those to whom the ordinary operations of human trade and labour had proved tedious or unproductive—with whom the toils, aims, and impulses of society were deficient of interest, or, upon whom, an inordinate desire of a sudden to acquire wealth had exercised a sufficiently active influence to impel to the novel employment of gold-finding—or rather *gold-seeking*, for it was not always that the search was successful—the very name of such a pursuit carrying with it to the bosoms of many no small degree of charm and persuasion. To these, a wholesome assortment of other descriptions may be added, of character and caste such as will be found ordinarily to compose the frontier and outskirts of civili-

zation, as rejected by the wholesome current, and driven, like the refuse and the scum of the waters, in confused stagnation to their banks and margin. Here, alike, came the spendthrift and the indolent, the dreamer and the outlaw, congregating, though guided by varying and contradictory impulses, in the formation of a common caste, and in the pursuit of a like object—some with the view to profit and gain; others, simply from no alternative being left them, and that of gold-seeking, with a better sense than their neighbours, being in their own contemplation, truly, a *dernier* resort. The reader can better conceive than we describe, the sort or rather the sorts of people, passions and pursuits herding thus confusedly together, and with the various objects of which we speak. Others, indeed, came into the society, like the rude but honest woodman to whom we have already afforded the civility of an introduction, almost purely from a spirit of adventure, that, growing impatient of the confined boundaries of its birth-place, longed to tread new forests, and contend with new enemies among its recesses. A spirit, we may add, the same, or not materially differing with that, which, at an earlier period of human history, though in a condition of society not dissimilar, begot the practices denominated by a most licentious courtesy those of chivalry. But, of whatever stuff the *moral* of this people may have been made up, it is not less certain than natural that the mixture was still incoherent—the parts had not yet entirely coalesced together. Though ostensibly in the pursuit of the same interest and craft, they had any thing but a like fortune, and the degree of concert and harmony which subsisted between them was but shadowy and partial. A mass so heterogeneous in its origin

and tendency might not so readily amalgamate. Strife, discontent, and contention were not unfrequent; and the labourers at the same instrument, mutually depending on each other, not uncommonly came to blows over it. The successes of any one individual—for, as yet, their labours were unregulated by arrangement, and each worked on his own score—procured for him the hate and envy of some of the company; while it aroused the ill-disguised dissatisfaction of all; and nothing was of more common occurrence, than, when striking upon a fruitful and productive section, even among those interested in the discovery, to find it a disputed dominion. Copartners no longer, a division of the spoils, when accumulated, was usually terminated by a resort to blows; and the bold spirit and the strong hand, in this way, not uncommonly acquired the share for which it was too indolent to toil in the manner of its companions. The issue of these conflicts, as may be imagined, was sometimes wounds and bloodshed, and occasionally death: the field, we need scarcely add, since this is the history of all usurpation,—remaining, in every such case, in possession of the party proving itself most strong or courageous. Nor need this history surprise—it is history, veracious and sober history of a period, still within recollection, and of events of almost recent occurrence. The wild condition of the country—the absence of all civil authority, and almost of laws, certainly of officers sufficiently daring to undertake their honest administration, and shrinking from the risk of incurring for the performance of their duties the vengeance of those, who, though disagreeing among themselves, at all times made common cause against the ministers of justice as against a common enemy—may readily account for the frequency and impunity with which these desperate

men committed crime, and defied its consequences.

But we are now fairly in the centre of the village—a fact of which, in the case of most southern and western villages, it is necessary distinctly, and in so many words, to apprise the traveller. In those parts, the scale by which towns are laid out is always magnificent. The founders seem to have calculated usually upon a population of millions; and upon spots and sporting-grounds, measurable by the olympic coursers, and the ancient fields of combat, when scythes and elephants and chariots made the warriors, and the confused cries of a yelping multitude composed the conflict itself. There was no want of room, no risk of narrow streets and pavements, no deficiency of area in the formation of public squares. The houses scattered around the traveller, dotting at long and unfrequent intervals the ragged wood which enveloped them, left few stirring apprehensions of their firing one another. The forest, where the land was not actually built upon stood up in its primitive simplicity undishonoured by the axe. Such was the condition of the settlement at the period when our hero so unconsciously entered it. It was night, and the lamps of the village were all in full blaze, illuminating with an effect the most picturesque and attractive the fifty paces immediately encircling them. Each dwelling boasted of this auxiliar and attraction; and in this particular but few cities afford so abundantly the materials for a blaze as our country villages. Two or more slight posts are erected at convenient distances from each other in front of the building—a broad scaffold, sufficiently large for the purpose, is placed upon them, on which a thick coat of clay is plastered; at evening a pile is built upon this of dry timber and the rich pine which overruns and mainly marks the forests

of the south. These piles, in a blaze, serve the nightly strollers of the settlement as guides and beacons, and with their aid, our hero, safely driven by Forrester, wound his way into the little village of Chestatee.

Forming a square, in the very centre of the town, a cluster of four huge fabrics, in some sort sustained the pretensions of the settlement to this epithet. This ostentatious collection, some of the members of which appeared placed there rather for show than service, consisted of the court-house, the jail, the tavern, and the shop of the blacksmith—the two last-mentioned being at all times the very first in course of erection, and the essential nucleus in the formation of the southern and western settlement. The court-house and its apt corollary the jail, standing directly opposite and fronting each other, carried in their faces a family outline of sympathetic and sober gravity. There had been some effort at pretension and dignity in their construction, both being unnecessarily and cumbrously large, awkward, and unwieldy; and, occupying, as they did, the only portion of the village which had been stripped of its forest covering, bore an aspect of mutual and ludicrous wildness and vacancy. They had both been built upon a like plan and equal scale; and the only difference existing between them, but one that was immediately perceptible to the eye, was the superfluous abundance of windows in the former, and the deplorable deficiency in this particular which characterized the latter. A moral agency had most probably prompted the architect to the distinction here hit upon—and he felt, doubtless, in admitting free access to the light in the house of justice, and in excluding it almost entirely from that of punishment, that he had recognised the proprie-

ties of a most excellent taste and true judgment. These apertures, clumsily wrought in the logs of which the buildings were made, added still more to their generally uncouth appearance. There was yet, however, another marked difference between the court-house and jail, which we should not omit to notice. The former had the advantage of its neighbour and ally, in being surmounted by a small tower or cupola, in which a bell of moderate size hung suspended, permitted to speak only on such important occasions as the opening of court, Sabbath service, and the respective anniversaries of the birthday of Washington and the Declaration of Independence. This building, thus distinguished above its fellows, served also all the purposes of a place of worship, whenever some wandering preacher found his way to the settlement; an occurrence, at the time we write, of most occasional character. To each of the four vast walls of the jail, in a taste certainly not bad, if we consider the design and character of the fabric, but a single window was allotted—that too of the very smallest description for human uses, and crossed at right angles with rude and slender bars of iron, the choicest specimens of workmanship from the neighbouring smithy. The distance between each of these four equally important buildings was by no means inconsiderable, if we are required to make the scale for our estimate, that of the cramped and diminished limits accorded to like matters in cities, where men and women appear to increase in due proportion as the field lessens upon which they must encounter in the great struggle for existence. Though neighbours in every substantial respect, the four fabrics were most uncharitably remote, and stood frowning coldly and gloomily over and against one another—

scarcely relieved of the cheerless and sombre character of their rough outsides, even when thus brightly illuminated by the glare thrown upon them by the several blazes, flashing out upon the scene they were approaching, from the twin lamps, advanced some twenty paces from, and in front of, the tavern, through whose wide and unshashed windows an additional lustre, as of many lights, gave cheering indications of life and good lodgings within. At a point equidistant from, and forming one of the angles of the same square with each of these, the broader glare from the smith's furnace streamed in bright lines across the plain between, pouring through the unclayed logs of the hovel, in which, at his craft, the industrious proprietor was even then busily employed. Occasionally, the sharp click of his hammer, ringing upon and redounding from his anvil, and a full blast from his capacious bellows, indicated the busy animation, if not the sweet concert, the habitual cheerfulness and charm, of a more civilized and better regulated society.

Nor was the smith, at the moment of our entrance, the only noisy member of the little village. The more pretending establishment to which we are rapidly approaching, threw out its clamours, and the din of many voices gathered upon the breeze in most wild and incoherent confusion. Deep bursts of laughter, and the broken stanza of an occasional catch roared out at intervals, promised something of relief to the dull mood; while, as the sounds grew more distinct, the quick ear of Forrester was enabled to distinguish the voices of the several revellers. But even Forrester was not at a little loss, seemingly, to account for the rather extravagant degree of their hilarity. He knew how slight were the links of fellowship between

the gold diggers generally, and felt satisfied that some unwonted occasion must have arisen for the uproar. A nearer approach soon informed him of the mystery ; but all further speculations of his own were arrested by a deep groan and an impatient movement in the bottom of his wagon. Forgetting all other matters, he procured assistance, and avoiding the chief entrance to the inn, carried our wounded traveller to a quiet couch in the upper story of the building, then set off, at once, in search of the self-constituted surgeon of that insulated region.

CHAPTER VI.

" Did you ever, ever, ever, in your life ride a rail ?—

Such a deal of pleasure's in it that I wonder you refuse,
You are perch'd upon the shoulders of those who never fail,

In spite of all your pleading, sir, to chuck you where they
choose.

What though a group of brambles present their thorny faces,

They do not wait to ask you how you like the situation,
But down you go and test awhile those penetrating places,

Nor scramble out until you give a cry of approbation.

Ho ! for the ride, the pleasant ride, the ride upon a rail,
The pedler's worthy of his pay, so give him his regale—

The seven-sided pine rail, the pleasant bed of briar,

The little touch of Lynch's law, with a dipping in the mire."

Song of the Regulators.

THE leech was soon procured, and a few moments of examination showed the wounds of Ralph Colleton to be easily medicable. The loss of blood alone had been the cause of his stupor, and the moderate skill of our country surgeon sufficed to put the mind of Forrester at rest upon the sub-

ject of his charge. The hurts of the youth were quickly dressed, and returning consciousness soon enabled him to appreciate the communicative character of his burly friend. Prevented from speaking himself, he was content to receive from the woodman a brief account of the manner of his discovery and his present whereabouts. From this point the transition was quite natural to the subject of the uproarious mirth going on in the apartment below, the cause of which the woodman gave in the following characteristic language.

"Why, you must know, 'squire, that the regulators have made out to catch a certain Yankee pedler—one Jared Bunce; and you must know 'squire, a more cunning and presumptuous rascal don't come from all Connecticut. They caught the critter not an hour ago, and they'll hammer him into another guess sort of machinery 'fore he gets through their hands; though I'm very much afeared all that will be of little service; for you know, as the old people say, 'what's bred in the bone won't come out of the flesh.' Maybe he isn't a great seamp. You can't measure his rascality, 'squire, if you was to try. Why, he can walk through your pockets, and the money will naturally cleave to him as if he were all wax. His very look stands for dollars and cents. Ah but he's a raal one. He does come over the old folks so with his tin wares—his coffee-pots and kettles, put together with soft solder—and there's no standing his blarney. He can cheat you out of your eyes, and you won't know about it till it's all done, and too late to make a fuss. He's been playing his tricks through the clearing, it's now better than three years, and somehow he always got off; but last year the regulators swore for him, and he cut dirt, I tell you."

"Who are the regulators?" inquired the youth.

"What, you live in Georgia, and never heard tell of the regulators? Well, that's queer, anyhow. But, the regulators are just, simply, you see, our own people; who, every now and then, turn out,—now one set and now another,—and whenever a chap like this same Jared Bunce goes about, living on everybody, and coming Yankee over everybody, they hunt him up and pay off old scores. Sometimes they let him off with a light hand, but then, you see, it altogether happens according to his behaviour. Sometimes they give him Lynch's Law, after old Nick Lynch, who invented it in Virginny, long before your time or mine. Sometimes they ride him upon a rail, and then duck him in the pond. It all depends, you see, upon the humour of the regulators."

"And which of these punishments will they inflict upon the Yankee?"

"Well, now, I can't say—but I take it, he runs a chance of hitting hard agin all of 'em. They've got a long score agin him. He's taken in everybody with his notions. Some bought his clocks, which went only while the rogue was in sight, and after that they came to a full stand. Some bought ready-made clothes, which never lasted long enough for soap and the washerwoman; and there's old Jeremiah Seaborn that swears agin him for a fusee he sold little Jeremiah, the son, that bursted into flinders the very first fire, and tore the boy's hand and arm, there's no telling how. I reckon he's in a fair road for stumps."

"And will they seriously harm the poor fellow, and that too without law?"

The woodman turned more fully to the youth, as if doubting the sincerity, as he certainly seemed

not a little surprised at the simplicity, of the question.

"Harm him—poor fellow! I wonder, 'squire, that you should speak so of such a fellow;—a fellow that's got no more soul than my whip-handle, and isn't half so much to be counted on in a fight. Why, he only goes about the country to rob and to defraud; and ha'n't spirit enough, would you believe it, either to get drunk with his friend or have it out with his enemy. I shouldn't myself like to see the fellow's throat cut, but I an't scrupulous to say, I see no harm in his having the benefit of a few hickories, and a dip in the horsepond; and if you knew but half as much of his rogueries as I, you'd soon come over to my opinion."

Ralph well knew how perfectly idle must be any effort in such an argument to overcome the prejudices of the sturdy woodman, in which, from repeated and extravagant impositions of the kind spoken of, the humble classes of the South had been taught but a common spirit. He contented himself, therefore, with a single remark upon the general propriety of forbearance where the laws could administer ample justice. But Forrester had his answer for this also.

"There, again, 'squire, you are quite out. The laws, somehow or other, can't touch these conniving fellows. They run through the country a wink faster than the sheriff's deputies, and laugh at all the processes you send after them. So, you see, there's no justice, no how, unless you catch a rogue like this, and wind up with him for all the gang—for they're all alike, all of the same family, and it comes to the same thing in the end."

But the volubility of Forrester was now suddenly concluded, as he discovered in his charge a manifestation of slumber so unequivocal, as to lead him

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to apprehend that much of his eloquence had been fruitlessly and unprofitably uttered. Leaving him, therefore, he descended to the hall from whence the merriment proceeded. The pedler was in truth in a custody by no means desirable, and the luckless Jared Bunce, whose experience had been somewhat extensive in difficulties of the like nature, now found himself in a situation, in which, perhaps, for the first time in his life, he coveted nothing. His prospect was indeed a dreary one. He was dragged before judges, all of whom had complaints to prefer, and injuries to redress; and none of whom were over-scrupulous as to the nature or the measure of that punishment which was to procure them the desired atonement. The company was not so numerous as noisy. It consisted of some fifteen persons, villagers as well as small planters in the neighbourhood, all of whom, having partaken *ad libitum* of the various liquors distributed freely about the table, which, in part, they surrounded, had, in the Indian phrase, more voices than tongues, and were sufficiently aroused by their potations to enter readily into any mischief. Some were smoking with all the industrious perseverance though with little of the phlegm and gravity of the Hollander; others, at brief intervals of the dialogue, if that may be considered such in which all parties were heard at the same moment, shouted forth songs in honour of the bottle, and with all the fervour and ferment of Bacchanalian novitiates; and not a few, congregating about the immediate person of the pedler, assailed his ears with threats sufficiently pregnant with tangible illustration to make him understand and acknowledge, by repeated starts and wincings, the awkward and uncomfortable predicament in which he stood. At length, the various disputants for justice, finding it difficult, if not im-

possible, severally, to command that attention to their claims which they conceived they merited, resolved themselves into something like a committee of the whole, and proceeded to the settlement of their controversy and the pedler's fate, in a manner more suited to the importance of the occasion. Having procured that attention which was admitted to be the great object, more by the strength of his lungs than his argument, one of the company, who was dignified with the title of colonel, spoke out for the rest.

"I say, boys,—'t isn't of any use, I reckon, for everybody to speak about what everybody knows. One speaker's quite enough, I take it, in this here matter before us. Here's none of us that ha'n't something to say agin this pedler, and the doings of the grand scoundrel in and about these parts, for a matter going on now about three years. Why, everybody knows him, big and little; and his reputation is so now, that the very boys take his name to frighten away the crows with. Indeed, for that matter, I take it, the name of any Yankee would be just as good, for of the two, the crows take less of our corn than the Yankees, and are more easily frightened. Now, one person can jist as well make a plain statement as another. I know, of my own score, there's not one of my neighbours, for ten miles round, that can't tell all about the rotten prints he put off upon my old woman; and I knows myself of all the tricks he's played at odd times, more than a dozen, upon 'Squire Nicholls there, and Tom Wescott, and Bob Snipes, and twenty others, and everybody knows them just as well as I. Now, to make up the score, and square off with the pedler, without any fuss or flustration, I move you that Lawyer Pippin take the chair, and judge in this matter; for I take it the day has come for

settling off accounts, and I don't see why we shouldn't be the regulators of Bunce, seeing that everybody agrees that he's a rogue, and a pestilence, and deserves regulation."

This speech was highly approved, and chimed in admirably with all prejudices. The pedler had many misdeeds to answer for, and the voice that called Lawyer Pippin to preside over the deliberations of the assembly was a unanimous one. The gentleman thus highly distinguished, was a dapper and rather portly little personage, with sharp twinkling eyes, a ruby and remarkable nose, a double chin, retreating forehead, and corpulent cheek. He wore green glasses of a dark, and a green coat of a light, complexion. The lawyer was the only member of the profession living in the village, had no competitor save when the sitting of the court brought in one or more from neighbouring settlements, and, being thus circumstanced, without opposition, and the only representative of his craft, he was literally, to employ the slang phrase common in that quarter, the "cock of the walk." He was, however, not so much regarded by the villagers a worthy as an able man. It required not much erudition to win the credit of profundity, and the lawyer knew how to make the most of his learning among those who had none. Like many other gentlemen of erudition, he was grave to a proverb when the occasion required it, and would not have been seen to laugh out of the prescribed place, though "Nestor swore the jest was laughable." He relied greatly on saws and sayings—could quote you the paradoxes of Johnson and the infidelities of Hume without always understanding them, and mistook, as men of that kind and calibre are very apt to do, the capacity to repeat the old absurdities of others as a proof of something in

himself. His business was not large, however, and among the arts of his profession, and as a mean for supplying the absence of more legitimate occasions for its employment, he was reputed as excessively expert in making the most of any difficulty among his neighbours. The egg of mischief and controversy was hardly laid, before the worthy lawyer, with maternal care, came clucking about it; he watched and warmed it without remission; and when fairly hatched, he took care that the whole brood should be brought safely into court, his voice and words and actions fully attesting the deep interest in their fortunes which he had manifested from the beginning. Many a secret slander, ripening at length into open warfare, had been traced to his friendly influence, either *ab ova*, or at least from the perilous period in such cases when the very existence of the embryo relies upon the friendly breath, the sustaining warmth, and the occasional stimulant. Lawyer Pippin, among his neighbours, was just the man for such achievements, and they gave him, with a degree of shrewdness common to them as a people, less qualified credit for the capacity which he at all times exhibited in bringing a case into, than in carrying it out of court. But this opinion in nowise affected the lawyer's own estimate of his pretensions. Next to being excessively mean, he was excessively vain, and so highly did he regard his own opinions, that he was never content until he heard himself busily employed in their utterance. An opportunity for a speech, such as the present, was not suffered to pass without due regard; but as we propose that he shall exhibit himself in the most happy manner at a future period in our narrative, we shall abridge, in few, the long string of queerly associated words in the form of a speech, which, on

assuming the chair thus assigned him, he poured forth upon the assembly. After a long prefatory, apologetic, and deprecatory exordium, in which his own demerits, as is usual with small speakers, were strenuously urged; and after he had exhausted most of the commonplaces about the purity of the ermine upon the robes of justice, and the golden scales, and the unshrinking balance, and the unsparing and certain sword, he went on thus:

"And now, my friends, if I rightly understand the responsibility and obligations of the station thus kindly conferred upon me, I am required to arraign before you, on behalf of the country, which country, as the clerk reads it, you undoubtedly are;—and here let me remark, my friends, the excellent and nice distinction which this phrase makes between the man and the soil, between the noble intellect and the high soul, and the mere dirt and dust upon which we daily tread. This very phrase, my friends, is a fine embodiment of that democratic principle upon which the glorious constitution is erected—but, as I was saying, my friends, I am required to arraign before you this same pedler, Jared Bunce, on sundry charges of misdemeanor, and swindling, and fraud—in short, as I understand it, for endeavouring, without having the fear of God and good breeding in his eyes, for endeavouring to pass himself off upon the good people of this county as an honest man. Is this the charge, my friends?"

"Ay, ay, lawyer, that's the how, that's the very thing itself. Put it to the skunk, let him deny that if he can—let him deny that his name is Jared Bunce—that he hails from Connecticut—that he is a shark, and a pirate, and a pestilence. Let him deny that he is a cheat—that he goes about with his notions and other rogueries—that he doesn't manu-

facture maple seeds, and hickory nutmegs, and ground coffee made out of rotten rye. Answer to that, Jared Bunce, you white-livered lizard."

Thus did one of his accusers take up the thread of the discourse as concluded in part by the chairman. Another and another followed with like speeches in the most rapid succession until all was again confusion; and the voice of the lawyer, after a hundred ineffectual efforts at a hearing, degenerated into a fine squeak, and terminated at last in a violent fit of coughing that fortunately succeeded in producing that degree of quiet around him in which his language had, singularly enough, entirely failed. For a moment the company ceased its clamour, out of respect to the chairman's cough; and having cleared his throat with the contents of a tumbler of Monongahela which seemed to stand permanently full by his side, he recommenced the proceedings; the poor criminal, in the mean time, standing mute and motionless, perfectly stupified with his terror, conscious of repeated offences, knowing perfectly the reckless spirit of those who judged him, and hopeless of escape from their hands, without, in the country phrase, the loss at least of his "wing and tail feathers."

The chairman with due gravity began:—

"Jared Bunce—is that your name?"

"Why, lawyer, I can't deny that I have gone by that name, ever since I began business, and I guess it's the right name for me to go by, seeing that I was christened by the name of Jared, after my old uncle Jared Withers, that lives down at Dedham, in the state of Massachusetts. He did promise to do something for me, seeing I was named after him, but he han't done nothing yet, no how. Then the name of Bunce, you see, lawyer, I took from my father, his name being Bunce, too, I guess."

"Well, Jared Bunce, answer to the point and be particular, and without circumlocution. You have heard some of the charges against you. Having taken them down in short-hand, I will repeat them to you severally."

The pedler approached a few steps, advanced one leg, raised a hand to his ear, and put on all the external signs of devout attention, as the chairman proceeded in the long and curious array.

"First, then, it is charged against you, Bunce, by young Dick Jenkins, that stands over in front of you there, that somewhere between the fifteenth and twenty-third of June, last June was a year, you came by night to his plantation, he living at that time in De Kalb county; that you stopped the night with him, without charge, and in the morning you traded a clock to his wife for fifteen dollars, and that you had not been gone two days, before the said clock began to go whiz, whiz, whiz, and commenced striking, whizzing all the while, and never stopped till it had struck clear thirty-one, and since that time it will neither whiz, nor strike, nor do nothing."

"Why, lawyer, I an't the man to deny the truth of this transaction, you see; but then, you must know, much depends upon the way you manage a clock. A clock is quite a delicate and ticklish article of manufacture, you see, and it an't everybody that can make a clock, or can make it go when it don't want to; and if a man takes a hammer or a horsewhip, or any other unnatural weapon to it, as if it was a house or a horse, why, I guess, it's not natural to expect it to keep in order, and it's no use in having a clock no how, if you don't treat it well. As for its striking thirty-one, that indeed is something quite remarkable, for I never heard one of mine strike more than twelve,

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and that's jest the number they're regulated to strike. But, after all, lawyer, I don't see that squire Jenkins has been much a loser by the trade, seeing that he paid me in bills of the —— Bank, and that stopped payment about the time, and before I could get the bill changed; it's true, I didn't let on that I knowed any thing about it, and got rid of the paper a little while before the thing was known abroad in the country."

"Now, look ye, you gingerbread-bodied Yankee—I'd like to know what you mean about taking whip and hammer to the clock. If you mean to say that I ever did such a thing, I'll lick you now, on the spot, by the eternal scratch."

"Order, order, Mr. Jenkins—order. The chair must be respected. You must come to order, Mr. Jenkins—" was the vociferous and urgent cry of the chairman, repeated by half a dozen voices—the pedler, in the meanwhile, half doubting the efficacy of the call, retreating with no little terror behind the chair of the dignified personage who presided.

"Well, you needn't make sich a howling about it," said Jenkins, wrathfully, and looking around him with the sullen ferocity of a chafed bear. "I know jist as well how to keep order, I reckon, as any on you; but I don't see how it will be out of order to lick a Yankee, or who can hinder me, if I choose it."

"Well, don't look at me, Dick Jenkins, with such a look again, or I'll have a finger in that pie, old fellow. I'm no Yankee to be frightened by sich a lank-sided fellow as you, and by dogs, if nobody else can keep you in order, I'm just the man to try if I can't. So don't put on any shines, old boy, or I'll darken your peepers, if I don't come very nigh plucking them out altogether." So spake another

of the company, who, having been much delectified with the trial, as it may be called, had been particularly solicitous in his cries for order, and to whom therefore the glance of Jenkins had been specially directed. Jenkins was not indisposed to the affray, and made an angry retort, which provoked another still more angry; but other parties interfering, the adjustment of the new difficulty was made to give place to that already in hand. The imputation upon Jenkins, that his ignorance of the claims of the clock to gentle treatment, alone had induced it to speak thirty-one times, and at length refuse to speak at all, had touched his pride nearly; and, sorely vexed, he retired upon a glass of whiskey to the further corner of the room, and with his pipe, nursing the fumes of his wrath, he awaited impatiently the signal for that wild mischief which he knew would come. In the mean while, the examination of the culprit proceeded; but, as we cannot hope to convey to the reader a description of the affair as it happened, to the life, we shall content ourselves with a simple and brief summary. The chair went on rapidly enumerating the sundry misdeeds of the Yankee, demanding, and in most cases receiving, rapid and unhesitating replies—evasively and adroitly framed, for the offender well knew that a single unlucky word or phrase would bring down upon his shoulders a wilderness of blows.

“You are again charged, Bunce, with having sold to Colonel Blundell, a coffee-pot, and two tin cups, all of which went to pieces, the solder melting off at the very sight of the hot water.”

“Well, lawyer, it stands to reason I can’t answer for that. The tin wares I sell stand well enough in a northern climate: there may be some difference in yours that I can’t account for; and I

guess, pretty much, there is. Now, your people are a mighty hot-tempered people, and take a fight for breakfast, and make three meals a day out of it—now, we in the north have no stomach for such fare ; so here now, as far as I can see, your climate takes pretty much after the people, and if so, it's no wonder that solder can't stand it. Who knows, again, but you boil your water quite too hot ? Now, I guess, there's jest as much harm in boiling water too hot, as in not boiling it hot enough. Who knows ? All I can say, in the way of excuse to the colonel, is, that the lot of wares I bring to this market next season, shall be calkilated on purpose to suit the climate."

The chairman seemed struck with this view of the case, and spoke with a gravity to his auditory corresponding with the deep sagacity he conceived himself to have exhibited.

" There does seem to be something, my friends, in this particular ; and it stands to reason, what will do for a nation of pedlers and patchers won't do for us. Why, when I recollect that they are buried in snows half the year, and living on nothing else the other half, I wonder how they get the water to boil at all. Answer to that, Bunce."

" Well, lawyer, I guess you must have travelled pretty considerably down east, in your time and among my people, for you do seem to know all about the matter, jest as well and something better than myself."

The lawyer was not a little flattered by the compliment so slyly and evasively put in, and responded to the remark with a due regard to his own increase of importance.

" I am not ignorant of your country, pedler, and of the ways of its people ; but it is not me that you are to satisfy. Answer to the gentlemen

around, if it is not a difficult matter for you to get water to boil at all during the winter months."

"Why, to say the truth, lawyer, when coal is scarce and high in the market, heat is very hard to come. Now I guess the ware I brought out last season was made under those circumstances; but I have a lot on hand now, which will be here in a day or two, which I should like to trade to the colonel, and I guess I may venture to say, all the hot water in the country won't melt the solder off."

"I tell you what, pedler, we are more likely to put you in hot water than try any more of your tin ware in that way. But where is your plunder—let us look into it, and see this fine lot of notions you speak of;" was the speech of the colonel already so much referred to, and whose coffee-pot bottom furnished so broad a foundation for the trial. He was a wild and roving person, to whom the tavern, and the race-course, and the cock-pit, from his very boyhood up, had been as the breath of life, and with whom a chance of mischief was never willingly foregone. But the pedler was wary, and knew perfectly his man. The lurking and but partially suppressed smile and sneer of the speaker had enough in them for the purposes of warning, and he replied cautiously and evasively.

"Well, colonel, you shall see them by Tuesday or Wednesday. I should be glad to have a trade with you—the money's no object, and if you have furs, or skins, or any thing that you like off your hands, there's no difficulty that I can see to a long bargain."

"But why not trade now, Bunce?—what's to hinder us now, you leather-faced Jew? I shan't be in the village after Monday."

"Well, then, colonel, that'll just suit me, for I did calkilate to call on you at the farm, on my

way into the nation where I'm going looking out for furs."

"Yes, and live on the best for a week, u der some pretence that your nag is sick, or you sick, or something in the way of a start—then go off, and cheat and laugh at me in the bargain. I reckon, old boy, you don't come over me in that way again; and I'm not half done with you yet about the ket-tles. That story of yours about the hot and cold climates may do for the daws to peck at, but you don't think the hawks will swallow it, do ye? Come—out with your notions!"

"Oh, to be sure, only give a body time, colonel," as, pulled by the collar, with some confusion and in great trepidation, responded the beleaguered dealer in clocks and calicoes—"they shall all be here in a day or two, at most. Seeing that one of my creatures was foundered, I had to leave the goods, and drive the other here without them."

The pedler had told the truth in part only. One of his horses had indeed struck lame, but he had made out to bring him to the village with all his wares, and this fact, as in those regions of question and inquiry was most likely to be the case, had already taken wind.

"Now, look ye, Bunce, do you take me for a blear-eyed mole, that can't look upon the daylight, and never seed the light of a man's eyes?" inquired Blundell, now closely approaching the beset tradesman, and taking him leisurely by the nape of the neck, "Do you want to take a summerset through that window, old fellow, that you try to stuff us with such tough stories? If you do, I *rether* reckon you can have your desires without much difficulty or delay." Thus speaking, and turning to some of those around him, he gave directions which imparted to the limbs of the pedler

a continuous and crazy motion, that made his teeth chatter.

"Hark ye, boys, jist step out, and bring in the cart of Jared Bunce, wheels and all, if so be that the body won't come off easily. We'll see into the collection for ourselves."

It was now the pedler's turn for speech—and, for a few moments forgetting the precise predicament in which he personally stood, and only solicitous to save his chattels from the fate which he plainly saw awaited them, his expostulations and entreaties were rapid and energetic.

"Now, dear colonel—good gentlemen—my dear friends—to-morrow or the next day you shall see them all—I'll go with you to your plantation—"

"No, thank you. I want none of your company—and look ye, if you know when you're well off, don't undertake to call me your friend. I say, Mr. Chairman, if it's in order—I don't want to do any thing disorderly—I move that Bunce's cart be moved into this very room—here, in the midst of us, that we may see for ourselves the sort of substance he brings here to put off upon us."

The chairman had long since seemingly given up all hope of exercising, in their true spirit, the duties of the station which he held. For a while, it is true, he battled with no little energy for the integrity of his dignity, with unlocked lungs and a stout spirit; but though fully a match in these respects for any one, or perhaps any two of his competitors, he found the task of contending with the dozen rather less easy, and in a little while, his speeches, into which he had lugged many a choice *ad captandum* of undisputed effect on any other occasion, having been completely merged in, and mingled with those of the mass, he wisely forbore any further waste of matter, in the stump oratory

of the south, usually so precious; and drawing himself up proudly and profoundly in his high place, he remained dignifiedly still and sullen, until the special reference thus made by Colonel Blundell again opened the fountains of the oracle, and set them flowing. The lawyer, thus appealed to in a long tirade, and in his happiest manner, delivered his opinion in the premises, and in favour of the measure. How, indeed, could he do otherwise, and continue that tenacious pursuit of his own interests which had always been the primary aim and object, as well of the profession as the person. He at once sagaciously beheld the embryo lawsuit and contingent controversy about to result from the proposition; and, in his mind, with a far and free vision, began to compute the costs and canvass the various terms and prolonged trials of county court litigation. His fancy, in the approaching docket, enumerated at least twenty cases of tort—assaults and batteries were in abundant store for the criminal, and the Common Pleas calender teemed richly to his view, with case after case, in trespass, assumpsit, trover, detinue, contract, &c. &c., to all which, as plaintiff's attorney, should be tacked the pretty and plump cognomen of Peter Pippin, Esq. He saw fee after fee thrust into his hands—he beheld the opposing parties desirous to conciliate, and extending to him sundry of those equivocal courtesies, which, though they take not the shape of money, are money's worth, and the worthy chairman had no scruples as to the propriety of the measure. The profits and pay once adjusted to his satisfaction, his spirit took a broad sweep, and the province of human fame, circumscribed, it is true, within the ten mile circuit of his horizon, was at once open before him. He beheld the strife, and enjoyed the triumph over his fellow-labourers at

the bar—he already heard the applauses of his neighbours at this or that fine speech or sentiment; and his form grew insensibly erect, and his eye glistened proudly, as he freely and fully assented to the measure which promised such an abundant harvest. Vainly did the despairing and dispirited pedler implore a different judgment;—the huge box which capped the body of his travelling vehicle, torn from its axle, without any show of reverential respect for screw or fastening, was borne in a moment through the capacious entrance of the hall, and placed conspicuously upon the table.

“The key, Bunce, the key!” was the demand of a dozen.

The pedler hesitated for a second, and the pause was fatal. Before he could redeem his error, a blow from a hatchet settled the difficulty, by distributing the fine deal-box cover, lock and hinges, in fragments over the apartment. The revelation of wares and fabrics—a strange admixture, with propriety designated “notions”—brought all eyes immediately around, and rendered a new order, for common convenience, necessary in the arrangement of the company. The chairman, chair and man, were in a moment raised to a corresponding elevation upon the table, and over the collection; and the controversy and clamour, from concentrating, as it did before, upon the person of the pedler, were now transferred, very rationally, to the commodities he brought for sale. Order having been at length procured, Colonel Blundell, who assumed to be the spokesman, and undertook the assertion of his own and the wrongs of his fellow-sufferers from the cupidity of the pedler, obtained and kept uninterrupted possession of the floor.

“And now, Mr. Chairman, as you have already heard the case, I will jist, with your permission, go

a little into the particulars of the rogueries and racialities of this same white-livered Yankee. Now in the first place, he is a Yankee, and that's enough itself, to bring him to punishment—but we'll let that pass, and go to his other transactions—for, as I reckon, it's quite punishment enough for the offence, to be jist what he is. He has traded rotten stuffs about the country, that went to pieces the first washing. He has traded calico prints, warranted for fast colours, that run faster than he ever ran himself. He has sold us coffee-pots, kettles and other tin stuffs, that didn't stand hot water at all; and then thinks, do you see, Mr. Chairman, to get off in this thing, by saying they were not made for our climate—and, let me ask, Mr. Chairman, they wasn't made for our climate, why did he bring 'em here? let him come to the scratch, and answer that, neighbours—but he can't. Well, then, as you've all heard, he has traded clocks to us: money's worth, that one day run faster than a Virginny mare, and, at the very next day, would stridle lame, and wouldn't go at all, neither for beating nor coaxing—and besides all these, neighbours, these an't quite enough to carry a skunk to the horse-pond, he has committed his abominations without number, all through the country, high and low—for hasn't he lied and cheated, and then he has the mean cowardice to keep out of the way of the *regulators*, who have been on the look out for his tracks for the last half year? Now, if these things an't *deserving* of punishment, there's nobody fit to be hung—there's nobody that ought to be whipped. Hickories oughtn't to grow any longer, and the best thing the governor can do would be to have all the jails burnt down from one *end* of the country to the other. The proof stands up *ag* Bunce, and there's no denying it; and it's no use

no how, to let this fellow come among us, year after year, to play the same old hand, and take our money for his rascally goods, and then go away and laugh at us. And the question before us, Mr. Chairman, is *jist* what I have said, and what shall we do with the *critter*? To show you that it's high time to do something in the matter, look at this piece of calico print, that looks, to be sure, very well to the eye, except, as you see, here's a tree with red leaves and yellow flowers—a most ridiculous notion, indeed, for who ever *seed* a tree with *sich* colours here, in the very beginning of summer?"

Here the pedler, for the moment, more solicitous for the credit of the manufacturers than for his own safety, ventured to suggest that the print was a mere fancy, a matter of taste—in fact, a notion, and not therefore to be judged by the standard which in a spirit rather more Procrustean than was necessary, had been brought to decide upon its merits. He did not venture, however, to say what, perhaps, would have been the true horn of the difficulty, that the print was an autumn or winter illustration, for that might have subjected him to condign punishment for its unseasonableness. As it was, the defence set up was to the full as unlucky as any other might have been.

"I'll tell you what, Master Bunce, it won't do to take natur in vain. If you can show me a better painter than natur, from your *parts*, I give up; but until that time, I say that any man who thinks to give the woods a different sort of face from what God give 'em, ought to be *licked* for his impudence if nothing else."

The pedler ventured again to expostulate; but the argument having been considered conclusive

against him, he was made to hold his peace, while the prosecutor, for so we may style him, proceeded.

"Now then, Mr. Chairman, as I was saying—here is a sample of the kind of stuff he thinks to impose upon us. But it won't do, Mr. Chairman. Look now at the rottenness of this here article, and I reckon its *jist* as good as any of the rest, and say whether a little touch of Lynch's law an't the very thing for the Yankee!"

Holding up the devoted calico to the gaze of the assembly, with a single effort of his strong and widely distended arms, he rent it asunder with little difficulty, the sweep not terminating until the stuff, which, by-the-way, resigned itself without struggle or resistance to its fate, had been most completely and evenly divided. The poor pedler in vain endeavoured to stay a ravage that, once begun, now became an epidemic. He struggled and strove with a tenacious hand and unreluctant spirit, holding on to sundry of his choicest bales, and claiming protection from the chair, until warned of his imprudent zeal in behalf of goods so little deserving of his risk, by the sharp and sudden application of an unknown hand to his ears, which sent him reeling against the table, and persuaded him into as great a degree of patience, as, under existing circumstances, he could be well expected to exhibit. Article after article underwent a like analysis of its strength and texture, and a warm emulation took place among the rioters, as to their several capacities in the work of destruction. The shining bottoms were torn from the tin-wares in order to prove that such a separation was possible, and it is doing but brief justice to the pedler to say, that, whatever, in fact, might have been the true character of his commodities, the very choicest

of human fabrics, could never have resisted the various tests of bone and sinew, tooth and nail, to which they were indiscriminately subjected. Immeasurable and wild was the confusion that followed. All restraints were removed—all hindrances, moral and physical, were withdrawn, and the tide rushed onward with a most headlong tendency. Apprehensive of pecuniary responsibilities in his own person, and having his neighbours wrought to the desired pitch of phrensy,—fearing also, lest his station might somewhat involve himself in the meshes he was desirous of weaving around the limbs of others, the sagacious chairman, upon the first show of violence, roared out his resignation, and descended from his pride of place. But this movement did not in the least impair the industry of the *regulators*. A voice was heard from the crowd, proposing a bonfire of the merchandise, and no second suggestion was necessary to this end. All hands but those of the pedler and the attorney were employed in building the pyre in front of the tavern some thirty yards, and here, in choice confusion, lay flaming calicoes, illegitimate silks, worsted hose, wooden clocks and nutmegs, maple-wood seeds of all descriptions, plaid cloaks, scents, and spices, jumbled up in ludicrous combinations of most infinite variety. A dozen hands busied themselves in procuring materials for the blaze, and in applying the torch to the toppling and devoted mass—howling over it, at every successive burst of flame that went up into the dark atmosphere, a wild and savage yell of triumph that tallied well with the proceeding in which they were engaged. The shouts and screams of the revellers, for such they literally seemed, were broken occasionally into something like a methodical arrangement of sounds, of a

character rather euphonous than otherwise, which took at length the form of a barbarous chorus, well known to that part of the country, and recited the modes of punishment usually adopted in the cases of the obnoxious.

With something like the stupor of despair, not venturing nigh, however, did the unfortunate merchant survey the conflagration which in a moment consumed the substance of a long season of industrious labour. Whatever may have been his demerits, his case deserved the sympathy which it did not find on this occasion. A verse of the wild and savage chorus referred to, and in which all the voices joined, smote harshly on his senses, and aroused him to a something of exaggerated consciousness. The strain ran on in most uncouth doggerel, in a variety of measures, and detailed the luxuries of a ride upon a rail somewhat at length and by no means unattractively. A single verse has been preserved as properly introductory to this chapter; but the song itself, and at full length had been long before made familiar to the ear now most deeply interested in the burthen. The pedler heard but seemed heedless; all senses, it would appear, having been lost or locked up in that sight; for, motionless and mute, with immoveable feature, the perfect imbovement of despair, he looked forth from the window, not venturing nigh to the spot where, in a huge pile, smoking and kindling, lay his devoted commodities—his entire stock in trade. The lawyer alone stood by him, wearing an expression of countenance as meaningless as it might well be made.

"Do you hear that song, Bunce?" was his question, as a stanza of the wild chorus swelled upon the ear—"Does your spirit take in its meaning, my friend."

"Friend!" was the very natural exclamation of

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the person so addressed, as he shrunk from the touch of the inquirer's hand, while a glance of concentrated bitterness and scorn passed rapidly into his eyes, giving to his countenance, at that moment, a degree of fierce manhood, which somewhat elevated his character even in the sight of Pippin himself. The sentiment, however, passed from his features, if not from his heart, as he replied, reproachfully enough, and justly enough, we may add, from our knowledge of the whole transaction—

"Why, lawyer, you needn't ask me that question, or indeed any question, seeing that I owe as much of this misfortune to you as to anybody else; for though you did stop when they began the mischief, yet if you had but acted like a friend, you could have saved the stuff and kept me out of harm."

"There you do me wrong, pedler. They had sworn against you long ago, and you know them well enough to know the devil himself couldn't stop them when fairly upon the track. But now, Bunce, don't be down in the mouth. I'm the man to have justice done you, and get you recompense for this."

"You, lawyer? well, I should like to know how you calkilate to do that?"

"I'll tell you. You know my profession."

"I guess I do, pretty much."

"Thus, then—most of these are men of substance; at least they have enough to turn out a pretty good case each of them—now all you have to do is to bring suit. I'll do all that, you know, the same as if you did it yourself. You must lay your damages handsomely, furnish a few affidavits, put the business entirely in my hands, and—how much is the value of your goods?"

"Well, I guess they might be worth something

over three hundred and twenty dollars and shillings, York money."

"Well, give me all the particulars, and I vent to assure you that I can get five hundred dol damages at least, and perhaps a thousand. But this we can talk more at leisure when you are safety. Where's your cart, Bunce?"

"On t'other side of the house—what they've of it."

"Now, then, while they're busy over the bl put your tackle on, hitch your horse, and take back track to my clearing; it's but a short mile a quarter, and you'll be there in no time. I'll low in a little while, and we'll arrange and de erate upon the matter."

"Well, now, lawyer, but I can't—my horse you see, having over eat himself, is struck with founders and can't budge a step. I put him 'Squire Dickens' stable, 'long with his animals, seeing that he had'nt had much the day befor emptied the corn from their trough into his, and see what's come of it. I hadn't ought to done to be sure."

"That's bad, Bunce; very bad—but that n not stop you. Your life, Bunce, is in danger, I have too much regard for you to let you i it by longer stay here. Take my nag, there—second one from the tree, and put him in gears in place of your own. He's as gentle a spaniel, and goes like a deer; so you need'nt afraid of him. You know the back track to house, and I'll come after you, quietly bring your creature along. I 'spose he's not so i but he can bring me."

"He can do that, lawyer, I guess, without d iculty. I'll do as you say, and be off pretty sli Five hundred dollars damage, lawyer—eh?"

"No matter about that, till I see you. Put your nag in gears quickly and quietly—you have little time to spare!"

The pedler proceeded to the work, and was in a little while ready for a start. But he lingered at the porch.

"I say, lawyer, it's a hard bout they've given me this time. I did fear they would be rash and obstropulous, but didn't think they'd gone so far. Indeed, it's pretty clear, if it had'n't been that the cursed cretur failed me, I should not have trusted myself in the place, after what I was told they meant to do with me."

"Well, but Bunce, you have been rather too sly in your dealings, and they have, you must confess, a good deal to complain of. Now, though I said nothing about it, that coat you sold me for a black grew red with a week's wear, and threadbare in a month."

"Now, don't talk, lawyer, seeing you ha'n't paid me for it yet; but that's neither here nor there. I have, as you say, done some queer things in my time, and did sell my goods for something more than might have been their vally; but I hadn't ought to had such a punishment as this."

The wild song of the rioters rung in his ears, followed by a proposition, seemingly made with the utmost gravity, to change the plan of operations, and instead of giving him the ride upon the rail, cap the blazing goods of his cart with the proper person of the proprietor. The pedler lingered to hear no further; and the quick ear of the lawyer, as he returned into the hall, distinguished the rumbling motion of his cart hurrying down the road. But he had scarcely reseated himself and resumed his glass, before Bunce also reappeared.

"Why, man, I thought you were off. You burn daylight; though they do say, those whom water won't drown, rope must hang."

"There is some risk, lawyer, to be sure; but when I recollected how much I want this box, which you see is a fine one, though they have disfigured it, I thought I should have time enough to take it with me, and any thing that might be lying about; looking around the apartment as he spoke, and gathering up a few fragments which had escaped the notice of the enemy.

"Begone, fool!" exclaimed the lawyer, impatiently. "They are upon you—they come—fly for your life, you dog—I hear their voices."

"I'm off, lawyer"—and looking once behind him as he hurried off, the pedler passed from the rear of the building as they who sought him re-entered in front.

"The blood's in him—the Yankee will be Yankee still, though his ears suffer for it," was the muttered remark of the lawyer, as he prepared to encounter the returning rioters.

CHAPTER VII.

"Here be a goodly company enough,
Much merriment and clamour—not to speak
Of the fair jest, and laughter-making bowl—
Will't please you join us?"

It was at this moment that Forrester entered the tavern-hall, curious to know the result of the trial, from which his attendance upon our hero had unavoidably detained him. The actors of the drama were in better humour than before, and uproarious mirth had succeeded to ferocity. They were all in the very excess of self-glorification; for, though somewhat disappointed of their design, and defrauded of the catastrophe, they had nevertheless done much, according to their own judgment, and enough, perhaps, in that of the reader, for the purposes of justice. The work of mischief had been fully and foully consummated; and though, to their notion, still somewhat incomplete from the escape of the pedler himself, they were in great part satisfied—some few among them, indeed—and among these our quondam friend Forrester may be included—were not sorry that Bunce had escaped the application of the personal tests which had been contemplated for his benefit; for, however willing, it was somewhat doubtful whether they would have been altogether able to save him from the hands of those having a less scrupulous regard to humanity. Still, the uproar of the party, though now of a less wolfish nature, had undergone little diminution.

The sudden appearance of Forrester revived the spirit of the transaction, now beginning somewhat to decline, as several voices undertook to give him a veracious account of its progress and results. The lawyer was in his happiest mood, as things so far, had all turned out as he expected. His voice was loudest, and his oratory more decidedly effective than ever. The prospect before him was also of so seductive a character, that he yielded more than was his wont to the influences of the bottle-god, standing before him in the shape of the little negro, who served forth the whiskey, in compliance with the popular appetite, from a little iron hooped keg, perched upon a shelf conveniently in the corner.

"Here Cuffee, you thrice-blackened baby or Beelzebub!—why stand you there, arms akimbo and showing your ivories, when you see we have no whiskey! Bring in the jug, you imp of darkness—touch us the Monongahela, and a fresh tumble for Mr. Forrester—and, look you, one too for Col. Blundell, seeing he's demolished the other. Quick you terrapin!"

Cuffee recovered himself in an instant. His hands fell to his sides—his mouth closed intuitively and the whites of his eyes changing their fixed direction, marshalled his way with a fresh jug, containing two or more quarts, to the rapacious lawyer.

"Ah, you blackguard, that will do—now, Mr. Forrester—now, Col. Blundell—don't be slow—no backing out, boys—hey, for a long drink to the stock in trade of our friend the pedler."

So spoke Pippin: all glasses were at once in hand, and a wild huzza attested the good-humour which the proposition excited. Potation rapidly followed potation, and the jug again demanded re-

plenishing. The company was well drilled in this species of exercise ; and each individual claiming caste in such sphere and circle, must be well prepared, like the knight-challenger of old tourney, to defy all comers. In the cases of Pippin and Blundell, successive draughts, after the attainment of a certain degree of mental and animal stolidity, seemed rather to fortify than to weaken their defences, and to fit them more perfectly for a due prolongation of the warfare. The appetite, too, like most appetites, growing from what it fed on, ventured few idle expostulations ; glass after glass, in rapid succession, fully attested the claim of these two champions to the renown which such exercises in that section of the world had won for them respectively. The subject of conversation, which, in all this time, accompanied their other indulgences—for the American drinker, unlike the German, grows garrulous with drink—was very naturally that of the pedler and his punishment. On this topic, however, a professional not less than personal policy sealed completely the lips of our lawyer, saving on those points which admitted of a general remark, without application or even meaning. Though drunk, his policy was that of the courts ; and the practice of the sessions had served him well, in his own person, to give the lie to the "*in vino veritas*" of the proverb.

Things were in this condition when the company found increase in the person of the landlord, who now made his appearance ; and, as we purpose that he shall be no unimportant auxiliar in the action of our story, it may be prudent for a few moments to dwell upon the details of his outward man, and severally to describe his features. We have him before us in that large, dark, and somewhat heavy person who sidles awkwardly into the apartment,

as if only conscious in part of the true uses of his legs and arms. He leans at this moment over the shoulders of one of the company, and, at the same time, with an upward glance, surveys the whole, while whispering in his ears. His lowering eyes, almost shut in and partially concealed by his scowling and bushy black eyebrows, are of a quick gray, stern and penetrating in their general expression, yet, when narrowly observed, putting on an air of vacancy, if not stupidity, that furnishes a perfect blind to the lurking meaning within; his nose is large, yet not disproportionately so; his head is well made, though a thorough-bred phrenologist might object to a strong animal preponderance in the rear; his mouth, bold and finely curved, is rigid however in its compression, and the lips, at times almost woven together, are largely indicative of ferocity; they are pale in colour, and dingily so, yet his flushed cheek and brow bear striking evidence of a something too frequent revel; his hair, thin and scattered, is of a dark brown complexion and sprinkled with gray; his neck is so very short that a single black handkerchief, wrapped loosely about it, removes all seeming distinction between itself and the adjoining shoulders—the latter being round and uprising, forming a socket, into which the former appears to fall as into a designated place. As if more effectually to complete the unfavourable impression of such an outline, an ugly scar, partly across the cheek, and slightly impairing the integrity of the left nostril, adds to his whole look a sinister expression, calculated to defeat entirely any neutralizing or less objectionable feature. His form—to conclude the picture—is constructed with singular power; and though not symmetrical, is far from ungainly. When impelled by some stirring mo-

five, his carriage is easy, without seeming effort, and his huge frame throws aside the sluggishness which at other times invests it, putting on a habit of animated exercise which changes the entire appearance of the man. Such was Walter, or, as he was more familiarly termed in the conventicle, Wat Munro. He took his seat with the company, with the ease of one who neither doubted nor deliberated upon the footing which he claimed among them. He was not merely the publican of his profession, but better fitted indeed for perhaps any other avocation, as may possibly be discovered in the progress of our narrative. To his wife, a good quiet sort of body, who, as Forrester phrased it, did not dare to say her soul was her own, he deputed the whole domestic management of the tavern; while he would be gone, nobody could say where or why, for weeks and more at a time, away from bar and hostel, in different portions of the country. Nobody ventured to inquire into a matter that was still sufficiently mysterious to arouse curiosity; the people who lived with and about him generally entertaining a degree of respect, amounting almost to vulgar awe for his person and presence, which prevented much inquiry into his doings. Some few, however, more bold than the rest, spoke in terms of dislike and suspicion; but the number of this class was inconsiderable, and they themselves felt that the risk which they incurred was not so unimportant as to permit of their going much out of the way to trace the doubtful features in the landlord's life. As we have already stated, he took his place along with his guests; the bottles and glasses were replenished, the story of the pedler again told, and each individual once more busied in describing his own exploits. The lawyer, immersed in visions of grog

and glory, rhapsodized perpetually and clap his hands. Blundell, drunkenly happy, at every discharge of the current humour, made an abort attempt to chuckle, the ineffectual halloo gurgled away in the abysses of his mighty throat; and at length, his head settled down supinely upon his breast, his eyes were closed, and the hour of victory had gone by; though even then, his jaws opening at intervals for the outward passing of something which by courtesy might be considered a laugh, attested the still anxious struggle of the inward spirit, battling with the weakness of the flesh. The example of a leader like Blundell had a most pernicious effect upon the uprightness of the greater part of the wild company. Having the sanction of such high authority, several of the minor spirits it is true, settled down into their chairs without a struggle. The survivors made some lugubrious efforts at a triumph over their less stubborn companions, but the loud and husky laugh was but a poor apology for the proper performance of this feat. Munro, to his other qualities added those of a sturdy *vivant*, together with Forrester, and a few still girt in the lawyer as the prince of the snipe, discharged their witticisms without any dread of replication, upon the staggering condition of the affairs; not forgetting in their assaults the fruit and disputatious civilian himself. That word we regret to add, though still unwilling to yield and still striving to retort, had nevertheless suffered considerable loss of equilibrium. His speeches were more than ever confused, and it was marked that his eyes danced about hazily, with most moist and ineffectual expression. He looked about, however, with a stupid gaze of self-satisfaction; but his laugh and language, forming

pe strange and most unseemly coalition, degenerated
ery at last into a most dolorous and wo-begone snuffle,
iv indicating the rapid departure of the few mental
ing and animal holdfasts which had lingered with him
ta so long. While thus reduced, his few surviving
his senses were at once called into acute activity by
the appearance of a sooty little negro, who placed
within his grasp a misshapen fold of dirty paper,
the which a near examination made out to take the
x form of a letter.

“Why, what the d—l, d—d sort of fist is this
a you’ve given me, you bird of blackness! where
ch got you this vile scrawl—faugh—you’ve had it in
e your jaws, you raven, have you not?”

The terrified urchin retreated a few paces
n while answering the inquiry.

“No, massa lawyer—de pedler—da him gib um
r to me so. I bring um straight as he gib um to
e me.”

“The pedler—why, where is he—what the devil
e can he have to write about!” was the universal
r exclamation.

“The pedler!—” said the lawyer, and his so-
briety grew strengthened at the thought of busi-
ness: he called to the waiter and whispered in his
e ears—

“Hark ye, Cuffee; go bring out the pedler’s
horse, saddle him with my saddle which lies in the
gallery, bring him to the tree, and look ye, make no
noise about it, you scoundrel, as you value your
e ears.”

Cuffee was gone on his mission, and the whole
assembly, aroused by the name of the pedler and
the mysterious influence of the communication
upon the lawyer, gathered, with inquiries of im-
patient anticipation, around the person of that
worthy. Finding him slow at the revelation, they

clamoured for the contents of the epistle and route of the writer—neither of which did Pi seem desirous to communicate. His evasions unwillingness were all in vain, and he was length compelled to undertake the perusal of scrawl; a task he would most gladly have avoided while in their presence. He was in doubt and—what could the pedler have to communicate paper, which might not have been left over their interview? His mind was troubled forebodings, and pushing the crowd away immediately about him, he tore open the envelope and began the perusal; proceeding with a measured gait, the result as well of the ‘damned cr hand’ as of the still foggy intellect and unse vision of the reader. But as the characters their signification became more clear and obvi to his gaze, his features grew more and more sobered and intelligent—a blankness overspread his face—his hands trembled, and finally, his prehensions, whatever they might have been, having seemingly undergone full confirmation, he crumpled the villanous scrawl in his hands, and dashed it to the floor in a rage, roared out, in quick succession, volley after volley of invective and denunciation upon the thrice blasted head of the troublesome and terrible pedler. The provocation must have been great, no doubt, to impart such animation at such a time to the man of law; and curiosity of one of the revellers getting the better of his scruples in such matters, if indeed scruples of any kind abode in such a section, prompted him to seize upon the epistle thus pregnant with mortal matter, in this way the whole secret became public property. As, therefore, we do not violate no confidence and shock no decorum, we proceed to read it aloud for the benefit of all.

To the Lawyer Pippin, Esquire.

"DEAR LAWYER,

"I guess I am pretty safe now from the *regulators*, and saving my trouble of mind, well enough, and nothing to complain about. Your animal goes as slick as grease, and carried me in no time out of reach of rifle shot—so you see it's only right to thank God, and you, lawyer; for if God hadn't touched you, and you hadn't lent me the nag, I guess it would have been a sore chance for my bones, in the hands of them savages and beasts of prey.

"I've been thinking, lawyer, as I driv along, about what you said to me, and I guess it's no more than right and reasonable I should take the law on 'em; and so I put the case in your hands, lawyer, to make the most on it; and seeing that the damages, as you say, may be over five hundred dollars, why, I don't see but the money is just as good in my hands as theirs, for so it ought to be. The bill of particulars, for the notions and other stuffs, I will send you in the bill. In the meanwhile you may say, having something to go upon, that the whole comes to five hundred and fifty dollars or thereabouts, for with a little calculation and figering, I guess it won't be hard to bring it up to that. This don't count the vally of the cart, for as I made it myself it didn't cost me much; but, if you put it in the bill, which I guess you ought to, put it down for twenty dollars more—seeing that if I can't trade for one somehow, I shall have to give something like that for another.

"And now, lawyer, there's one thing—I don't like to be in the reach of them 'ere regulators for some time to come yet, and guess 'twouldn't be altogether the wisest to stop short of a ride of fifteen miles to-night—so, therefore, you see it won't be in

my way, no how, to let you have your nag, which is a main fine one, and goes slick as a whistle—pretty much as if he and the wagon was made for one another; but this I guess will be no difference to you, seeing that you can pay yourself his value out of the damages. I'm willing to allow you one hundred dollars for him, though he ain't worth so much, no how, and the balance of the money you can send to me, or my brother, in the town of Meriden, in the state of Connecticut. So no more dear lawyer, at this writing, from

Your very humble servant to
command, &c. &c.

(Signed)

JARED BUNCE.

The dismay of the hapless and horseless attorney at this epistle, was only exceeded by the chagrin with which he perceived its circulation, and anticipated the odium in consequence. He leaped about the hall, among the company, in a restless paroxysm, now denouncing the pedler, now depicting their doubts and dissatisfaction at finding out the double game which their chairman had been playing. This trick of the runaway almost gave him a degree of favour in their eyes, which did not find any diminution when the lawyer, rushing forth from the apartment, with many imprecations encountered a new trial in the horse left him by the pedler; the miserable beast being completely ruined, unable to move a step, and more dead than alive. The punishment was complete.

CHAPTER VIII.

"A hopeless discontent, I still depart,
Denied the wholesome lights that others see,
And cheerless in the general providence."

RALPH opened his eyes at a moderately late hour on the ensuing morning, and found his acquaintance, Forrester, in close attendance. He felt himself somewhat sore from his bruises in falling, but the wound gave him little concern. Indeed, he was scarcely conscious of it. He had slept well, and was not unwilling to enter into the explanatory conversation which the woodman begun. From him he learned the manner and situation in which he had been found, and was made familiar with a partial history of his present whereabouts. In return, he gave a particular account of the assault made upon him in the wood, and of his escape—all of which, already known to the reader, will call for no additional details. In reply to the unscrupulous inquiry of Forrester, the youth, with as little hesitation, declared himself to be a native of the neighbouring state of South Carolina, born in one of its middle districts, now about to visit Tennessee. He concluded with giving his name.

"Colleton, Colleton"—repeated the other, as if reviving some recollection of the olden time—"Why, 'squire, I once *know'd* a whole family of that name in Carolina. I'm from Carolina myself, you must know. There was an old codger—a fine hearty buck—old Ralph Colleton—Colonel Ralph, as they used to call him. He did have a power of money, and a smart chance of lands and field nig-

gers ; but they did say he was going behind ha for he didn't know how to keep what he had. was always buying, and living large—but that ca last for ever. I saw him first at a muster. I v then just eighteen, and went out with the rest, the first time. Maybe, 'squire, I didn't take rag off the bush that day. I belonged to Capt Williams's troop, called the 'Bush Whacke We were all fine looking fellows, though I sa myself. I was no chicken, I tell you. From t day Mark Forrester wrote himself down 'm And well he might, 'squire, and no small one neith Six feet in stocking-foot, sound in wind and liml could outrun, outjump, outwrestle, outfight, : outdo anyhow, any lad of my inches in the wh district. There was Tom Foster, that for five l years counted himself cock of the walk, and crov like a chicken whenever he came out upon ground. You never saw Tom, I reckon, for he w off to Mississippi after I sowed him up. He coul stand it any longer, since it was no use—wel licked him in short order ; he wasn't a mouth After that the whole ground was mine—nob could stand before me, 'squire ; though now case may be different, for Sumter's a distr 'squire, that an't slow at raising game chickens.

At the close of this rambling harangue, M Forrester, as we may now be permitted to call h looked down upon his own person with no sn share of complacency. He was, doubtless, all man he boasted himself to have been. His y son, as we have already briefly described it, of ing, as well from its bulk and well distribu muscle as from its perfect symmetry, a fine mo for the hand of the statuary. After the indulg for a few moments in this harmless egotism, he

turned to the point, as if but now recollected, from which he set out.

"Well, then, Master Colleton, as I was saying, 'twas at this same muster that I first saw the squire. He was a monstrous clever old buck now, I tell you. Why, he thought no more of money than if it grewed in his plantation—he almost throwed it away for the people to scramble after. That very day, when the muster was over, he called all the boys up to Eben Garratt's tavern, and told old Eben to set the right stuff afloat, and put the whole score down to him. Maybe old Eben didn't take him at his word. Eben was a cunning chap, quite Yankee like, and would skin his shadow for a saddle back, I reckon, if he could catch it. I tell you what, when the crop went to town the old squire must have had a mighty smart chance to pay; for whatever people might say of old Eben, he knew how to calculate from your pocket into his with monstrous certainty. Well, then, as I was saying, squire, I shouldn't be afraid to go you a little bet,—your nag agin mine or so—that that same old Ralph Colleton was some kin of your'n. You're both of the same stock, I reckon."

"I must do all justice to your conjectures," replied the youth—"the person of whom you speak was indeed a near relative of mine—he was no other than my father."

"There now—I could have said as much, for you look for all the world as if you had come out of his own mouth. There is a trick of the eye which I never saw in any but you two; and even if you had not told me your name, I should have made pretty much the same calculation about you. The old squire, if I rightly recollect, was something stiff in his way, and some people did say he was proud, and carried himself rather high; but,

for my part, I never saw any difference 'twixt him and most of our Carolina gentlemen, who, you know, generally walk pretty high in the collar and have no two ways about them. For that matter, however, I couldn't well judge at that time—I may have been something too young to say for certain, what was what, at that time of my life."

"You are not even now so far advanced in years, Mr. Forrester, that you speak of your youth as of a season so very remote. What, I pray, may be your age? We may ask without offence such a question of men—the case, where the other sex is concerned, is, you are aware, something different." The youth seemed studiously desirous of changing the direction of the dialogue.

"Man or woman, 'squire, I see, for my part, no harm in the question. But do call me Forrester, or Mark Forrester, whichever pleases you best, and not mister, as you just now called me. I go by no other name. Mister is a great word, and moves people quite too far from one another. I never have any concern with a man that I have to mister and sir. I call them 'squire, because that's a title the law gives them—and when I speak to you, I say 'squire, or Master Colleton. You may be a 'squire yourself, but whether you are or are not, it makes no difference; for you get the name from your father, who is one. Then, again, I call you master—because you see you are but a youth, and have a long run to overtake my years, few as you may think them. Besides, master is a friendly word and comes easy to the tongue. I never, for my part, could see the sense in mister, except when people go out to fight, when it's necessary to do every thing in the politest manner; and then, it smells of long shot, and cold business, 'squire. 'Tis n't, to my mind, a good word among friends."

The youth smiled slightly and for a moment at the distinction, drawn with such nicety by his companion, between words which he had hitherto been taught to conceive synonymous or nearly so; and the reasons, such as they were, by which the woodman sustained his free use of the one to the utter rejection of the other. He did not think it advisable or important, however, to make up an issue on the point, however dissenting from the logic of his companion; and contented himself simply with a repetition of the question in which it had originated.

"Why, I take shame to answer you rightly, squire, seeing I am no wiser and no better than I am; but the whole secret of the matter lies in the handle of this little tomahawk, and this I made out of a live oak sapling some sixteen years ago—It's much less worn than I, yet I am twice its age, I reckon."

"You are now then about thirty-two?"

"Ay, ay, just thirty-two. It don't take much calculating to make out that. My own schooling, though little enough for a large man, is more than enough to keep me from wanting help at such easy arithmetic."

With the exception of an occasional and desultory remark or two, the conversation had reached a close. The gravity—the almost haughty melancholy which, at intervals, appeared the prevailing characteristic of the manners and countenance of the youth, served greatly to discourage even the blunt freedom of Mark Forrester; who seemed piqued at length by the unsatisfactory issue of all his endeavours to enlist the familiarity and confidence of his companion. This Ralph soon discovered—he had good sense and feeling sufficient to perceive the necessity of some alteration in his

habit, if he desired a better understanding with one, whose attendance, at the present time, was not only unavoidable but indispensable—one who might be of use, and who was not only willing and well-intentioned, but to all appearances honest and harmless, and to whom he was already so largely indebted. With an effort, therefore, not so much of mind as of mood, he broke the ice which his own indifference had suffered to close, and by giving a legitimate excuse for the garrulity of his companion, unlocked once more the treasure-house of his good-humour and volubility.

From the dialogue thus recommenced, we are enabled to take a farther glance into the history of Master Mark Forrester's early life. He was, as he phrased it, from "old So. Ca." pronouncing the name of the state in the abridged form of its written contraction. In one of the lower districts he still held, in fee, a small but inefficient patrimony; the profits of which were put to the use of a young sister. Times, however, had grown hard, and with the impatience and restlessness so peculiar to nearly all classes of the people of that state, Mark set out in pursuit of his fortune among strangers. He loved from his childhood all hardy enterprises; all employments calculated to keep his spirit from slumbering in irksome quiet in his breast. He had no relish for the labours of the plough, and looked upon the occupation of his forefathers as by no means fitted for the spirit, which, with little beside, they had left him. The warmth, excitability, and restlessness which were his prevailing features of temper, could not bear the slow process of tilling and sowing and cultivating the earth—watching the growth and generations of pigs and potatoes, and listening to that favourite music with the staid and regular farmer, the shoot-

ing of the corn in the still nights, as it swells with a respiring movement, distending the contracted sheaves which enclose it. In addition to this antipathy to the pursuits of his ancestors, Mark had a decided desire, a restless ambition, prompting him to see and seek and mingle with the world. He was fond, as our readers may have observed already, of his own eloquence, and having worn out the patience and forfeited the attention of all auditors at home, he was compelled, in order to the due appreciation of his faculties, to seek for others less experienced abroad. Like wiser and greater men, he too had been won away, by the desire of rule and reference, from the humble quiet of his native fireside; and if, in after life, he did not bitterly repent of the folly, it was because of that light-hearted and sanguine buoyancy of temperament which never deserted him quite, and supported him in all events and through every vicissitude. He had wandered much after leaving his parental home, and was now engaged in an occupation and pursuit which our future pages must develop. Having narrated in his desultory way to his companion, the facts which we have condensed, he conceived himself entitled to some share of that confidence of which he had himself exhibited so fair an example; and the cross examination which followed did not vary very materially from that to which most wayfarers in this region are subjected, and of which, on more than one occasion, they have been heard so vociferously to complain.

"Well, Master Ralph—unless my eyes greatly miscalculate, you cannot be more than nineteen or twenty at the most; and if one may be so bold, what is it that brings one of your youth and connexions abroad into this wilderness, among wild

men and wild beasts, and we gold-hunters, whom men do say are very little if any better than them?"

"Why, as respects your first conjecture, Master Forrester," returned the youth, "you are by no means out of the way. I am not much over nineteen, and am free to confess, do not care to be held much older. Touching your further inquiry, not to seem churlish, but rather to speak frankly and in a like spirit with yourself, I am not desirous to repeat to others the story that has been, perhaps, but learned in part by myself. I do not exactly believe that it would promote my plans to submit them to the examination of other people; nor do I think that any person whomsoever would be very much benefited by the knowledge. You seem to have forgotten, however, that I have already said that I am journeying to Tennessee."

"Left Carolina for good and all, heh?"

"Yes—perhaps for ever. But we will not talk of it."

"Well, you're in a wild world now, 'squire."

"This is no strange region to me, though I have lost my way in it. I have passed a season in the county of Gwinnett and the neighbourhood, with my uncle's family, when something younger, and have passed, twice, journeying between Carolina and Tennessee, at no great distance from this very spot. But your service to me, and the fact of your Carolina birth, deserves that I should be more free in my disclosures; and to account for the sullenness of my temper, which you may regard as something inconsistent with our relationship, let me say, that whatever my prospects might have been and whatever my history may be, I am at this moment altogether indifferent as to the course which I shall pursue. It matters not very

who greatly to me whether I take up my abode among the neighbouring Cherokees, or, farther on, along with them, pursue my fortunes upon the shores of the Red River or the Missouri. I have become, during the last few days of my life, rather reckless of human circumstance; and, perhaps, more criminally indifferent to the necessities of my nature and my responsibilities to society and myself, than might well beseem one so youthful, and, as you say, with prospects like those which you conjecture, and not erroneously, to have been mine. All I can say is, that when I lost my pathway last evening, my first feeling was one of a melancholy satisfaction; for it seemed to me that destiny itself had determined to contribute towards my aim and desire, and to forward me freely in the erratic progress, which, in a gloomy mood, I had most desperately and perhaps childishly undertaken."

The tone in which these remarks were made, enforced, in a great measure, the truth, in his own belief at least, of that portion of the youth's language which spoke of his indifference to his future destiny. There was a stern melancholy in the deep and low utterance—the close compression of lip—the steady, calm eye, that somewhat tended to confirm the almost savage sentiment of despairing indifference to life, which his sentiments conveyed; and had the effect of eliciting a larger degree of respectful consideration from the somewhat uncouth but really well-meaning and kind companion who stood beside him. Mark Forrester had good sense enough to perceive that the youth had been gently and well nurtured and deferentially treated—that his pride or vanity, or perhaps some nobler emotion, had suffered slight or rebuke; and that it was more than probable this emotion would, before

long, give place to others, if not of a more manly and spirited, at least of a more reflective and reasonable character. Accordingly, without appearing to annex any importance to, or even to perceive the melancholy defiance contained in the speech of the young man, he confined himself entirely to a passing comment upon the facility with which, having his eyes open, and the bright sunshine and green trees for his guides, he had suffered himself to lose his way—an incident excessively ludicrous in the contemplation of one, who, in his own words, could take the tree with the 'possum, the scent with the hound, the swamp with the deer, and be in at the death with all of them—for whom the woods had no labyrinth, and the night no mystery. He laughed heartily at the simplicity of the youth, and entered into many details, not so tedious as long of the various hair-breadth escapes, narrow chance and curious enterprises of his own initiation into the secrets of wood-craft, and to the trials and perils of which, in his own probation, his experience had necessarily subjected him. At length he concluded his narrative by seizing upon one portion of Ralph's language with an adroitness and ingenuity that might have done credit to an old diplomatist; and went on to invite the latter to quarter upon himself for a few weeks at least.

"Well, Master Colleton—so you see you are rambling, as you say, indifferent quite as to what quarter of the compass you turn the head of your creature—suppose now you take up quarters with me. I have, besides this room, which I only keep for my use of a Saturday and Sunday when I come to the village—a snug lodge a few miles off, and there room enough, and provisions enough, if you'll only stop a while and take what's going. Plenty of hogan hominy at all times, and we don't want for other an

better things, if we please. Come, stay with me for a month, or long as you choose, and when you think to go, I can put you on your road at an hour's warning. In the mean time, I can show you all that's to be seen. I can show you where the gold grows, and may be had for the gathering. We've snug lodgings, plenty of venison; and, as you must be a good shot coming from Carolina, you may bring down at day-dawn of a morning, a sluggish wild turkey, so fat that he will split open the moment he strikes the ground. Don't fight shy, now, 'squire, and we'll have sport long as you choose to stay with us."

The free and hearty manner of the woodman, who, as he concluded his invitation, grasped the hand of the youth warmly in his own, spoke quite as earnestly as his language, and Ralph in part fell readily into a proposal which promised something in the way of diversion. He gave Forrester to understand that he would probably divide his time for a few days between the tavern and his lodge, which he proposed to visit whenever he felt himself perfectly able to manage his steed. He signified his acknowledgment of the kindness of his companion with something less of hauteur than had hitherto characterized him; and remembering that on the subject of the assault made upon him, Forrester had said little, and that too wandering to be considered, he again brought it up to his consideration, and endeavoured to find a clew to the persons of those enacting the outlaws, whom he had endeavoured, though very imperfectly, to describe. On this point, however, he procured but little satisfaction. The description which he gave of the individual assailant whom alone he had been enabled to distinguish, though evidently under certain disguises, was not sufficient to permit of For-

rester's identification. The woodman was thing at a loss, though evidently satisfied the parties were not unknown to him in some character. As for the Pony Club, he gave history, confirmatory of that already related outlaw himself; and though avowing his personal fearlessness on the subject, did not w his opinion that the members were not to be with:—

“And, a word in your ear, 'squire—one the people you meet with in this quarter more of the Pony Club than is becoming in men—so steer clear of them, and keep a look-out right and left, if you would get o whole bones. They'll hardly trouble a bod for you see there's some of us that ca trigger and fling a knife, and won't stand l think when honest folks are in danger. see you again in an hour. I must go and loc our horses.”

CHAPTER IX.

"Is not the feast prepared? why sit ye not,
Cheerly, at ease, and with an appetite
Which, if the sauce be wanting, shall supply
That which it lacks of, so ye note it not?
Fall to, I pray."

"So young, and yet so desolate—'tis sad,
The wilderness should win the city's loss,
Yet know not of its gain."

IN a few days, so much for the good nursing of Forrester, and of his *soi-disant* medical attendant, Colleton was able to descend to the lower apartments of the tavern. His wound had been slight, and its treatment fortunate; his bruises were less manageable, and from these he suffered infinitely more than from the shot. With a hardy frame, however, and an impatient spirit, Ralph contrived to conquer much of the pain and inconvenience which they gave him, and proving how much in these matters depends upon the will, to resume his erect posture as if nothing had occurred. His exercise, however, was moderated duly, so as not to irritate anew his fast healing injuries. On this point, Forrester, who assumed all the offices of counsellor, was rigid, and it was only after repeated overtures on the part of the youth, and a lapse of several days, in all of which his impatience had been loud, that he permitted him to descend to the dinner-table of the inn, in compliance with the clamorous warning of the huge bell which stood at the entrance.

It was a subject of much doubt and deliberation in our mind, whether or not to furnish to the reader a full and dainty detail of the viands spread out on the present occasion. A supper or dinner has at all times been a favourite theme for display among the romancers. They appear to have seized upon it for portraiture and description, with as much reckless avidity usually as the most hungry knight among them might be conjectured to exhibit towards the real banquet and the substantials, after the labour of a hard day's fight for his honour and his mistress. Regarding such a theme evidently with an eye of great favour—possibly, as a common passage of arms, attesting the due degree of skill necessary for permission to enter upon the lists—there are few among our ablest writers in this field that have withheld their whole strength from the subject. Scott, following the example of Homer, always feeds his heroes well; and some excellent lessons might be gleaned from his writings by those over-delicate novelists, who seldom furnish hero or heroine with an appetite at all. Cooper keeps his adventurers well also, and is particular to have them fully supplied when in the woods and among the Indians. We cannot say that Bulwer has often admitted us to a regular dinner-party—Guloseton is no exception—unless it be among the rogues associated with one of his heroes, in the stews of London; but enough for example, in this particular, as well as authority, may be found in the industriously plied labours of the thousand and one followers and rivals of these great leaders in the field we speak of. Nor have our purely American writers—a tribe rather servilely dependent, we are constrained to admit, upon the dicta of European authority—disdained imitation in this respect.

It is rather remarkable that the very best passages from sundry of their works—so far as they appear to have been penned *con amore*, and under the influence of a spirit highly susceptible to the operations of its own fancies—are devoted to this sort of description. They have dilated with singular and conscious felicity, linked with a strange viand-like fascination of style, fitly illustrative of the subject,—upon the grace of gravies, the cream of custards, the currency of currants—the fantasies, in short, of fish, flesh, and fowl alike; and with a glorious hocus pocus, worthy of the weird sisters of Macbeth, they have made the whole earth and every sea contribute their dainty delectabilities, as indeed they should, to the pleasing of the palate of that hero, in whose fortunes, as in duty bound, the whole world must be so much interested. The compounds and concatenations of Paris—that centre of soup and civilization—mingled on the same board with the more solid characteristics of John Bull's refectory in London, exhibit a more beautiful national affinity, than, in political matters, we can ever hope to see take place between them. To these we may add the almost savage association of ponderosities and delicacies, in the furnishing of which the generous purveyor has seemingly spared neither labour nor expense, though sacrificing, most grievously we take it, all pretensions to good taste and a decent propriety, in the choice and distribution of his various dishes.

It was therefore, as we have already said, with a deliberation certainly due to, and imperatively demanded by the subject, that we debated with ourselves as to what we should do in the furnishing our hero's dinner-table. What shall we have, landlord—what's in the larder, most sweet hostess? Wanting in the Dame Quickly, and the Mistress

Ford, and sweet Anne Page, and that most truculent and magnificent of all worthies, Sir John Falstaff, our apprehensions as to the quality of our viands, by way of recompense for our other deficiencies, were only reasonable. We dreaded too, lest with a reference to what we have all this time been saying, we should not be able to provide our readers with that kind and quality of repast, to which it was but fair to infer their appetites had been accustomed; and, not without much hesitation, many misgivings, and a close examination into our right, as good chroniclers, to withhold any thing however humble in the progress of our story, we determined upon the seemingly rash step which in part we have taken. We perfectly well knew, that in our semi-barbarian region, south of the Potomac, or, in more familiar phrase, of Mason's and Dixon's line—we could not cater so widely or so variously for the dinner-table as in the land of notions and novelties, where the apples grow ready baked, in pies of goodly dimensions, and where Cape Cod, tendering its all bountiful aids and auxiliars, robs the sea-serpent of those delicate fins for which, it appears, in just revenge, he has pursued the smackmen into the very harbours of Yankee land. Our apprehensions may well be conceived, therefore, though it passes our ability to describe them, until, calling a council of war with our hostess, Mrs. Dorothy Munro,—whom your eye may perceive doling out sundry capacious plates of soup from the corpulent vessel beside her,—we determined, in few words, rather with the view to the enlightenment than the temptation of the reader, to set the repast, such as it is, without further hesitation before him.

The company at the dinner-table was much less numerous than that assembled in the great hall at

l of the pedler. Many of the persons then were not residents, but visitors in the village from the neighbouring country, who had come there, as is usually the case, on each day of the week, with the view not less to curing of their necessities, than the enjoyment of company. Having attended in the first to the ostensible objects of their visit, the villagers, in the usual phrase, "brought them out" in social, yet wild carousal, they consumed the residue of the day. It was in the evening that they met their acquaintance—found news, and obtained the news; objects of primary importance, at all times, with a people whose occupations, removed from the busy mart of the stirring crowd, left them no alternative but to do this or rust altogether. The regular customers of the tavern were not numerous therefore, consisted in the main of those labourers in the village who had not yet acquired the means of supporting a household of their own.

There was little form or ceremony in the proceedings of the repast. Colleton was introduced by a few words from the landlord to the landlady, Dorothy aforesaid, and to a young girl, her niece who sat beside her. It does not need that we dwell in regard to the former—she interferes so heartily in our story; but Lucy, her niece, must not be overlooked so casually. She has not any attractions in herself which claim our notice, occupies no minor interest in the story we propose to narrate. Her figure was finely formed, elegant and delicate, but neither diminutive nor feeble in proportion, symmetry, and an ease and grace of carriage and manners belonging to a far advanced stage of social organization than that which we find her. But this is easily accounted

for, and the progress of our tale will save us trouble of dwelling farther upon it now. Her, though slightly tinged by the sun, was beautiful smooth and fair. Her features might not be regular; perhaps not exactly such as in a critical examination we should call or consider handsome but they were attractive nevertheless, strongly marked, and well defined. Her eyes were dark blue; not languishingly so, but on the contrary rather lively and intelligent in their accustomed expression. Her mouth, exquisitely chiselled, coloured by the deepest blushes of the rose, had a seductive persuasiveness about it that might reveal one's own to some unconscious liberties; and the natural position of the lips, leaving them slightly parted, gave to the eye an added attraction in a double range which was displayed beneath of pearl-like and well-formed teeth; her hair was unconfined but short; and rendered the expression of her features more youthful and girl-like than might have been the result of its formal arrangement—it was beautifully glossy, and of a dark brown colour. Her demeanour was that of maidenly reserve—a lady-like dignity, a quiet serenity, approaching—at periods, when any remark calculated to infringe in the slightest degree upon those precautions with which feminine delicacy and formality guarded its possessor—a stern severity of glance approving her a creature taught in the true school of propriety, and chastened with a spirit that was not on a watch, always of perilous exposure in so young and of her sex. On more than one occasion did Ralph, in the course of the dinner, mark the indignant fire flashing from her intelligent eye, when the rude speech of some untaught assailed a sense finely wrought to appreciate proper boundaries to the always adventurous

of unbridled licentiousness. The youth felt that from these occasional glimpses that her education had been derived from a different influence, that her spirit deeply felt and deplored the situation of her present condition and abode.

The dinner-table, to which we now come, and at which two or three negroes have been busily employed in cumbering with well filled plates and dishes, was most plentifully furnished; though but a small portion of its contents could properly be classed as the head of delicacies. There were eggs, ham, hot biscuits, hominy, milk, marmalade, venison, *Johnny*, or journey cakes, and dried fruit stewed. These, with the preparatory soup, formed the chief components of the repast. Every thing was served up in a style of neatness and cleanliness, that, after all, was perhaps the best of all possible recommendations to the feast; and he soon found himself quite as busily employed as was consistent with prudence, in the destruction and overthrow of the tower of biscuits, the pile of eggs, and such other of the edibles around him as were least likely to prove injurious to his debilitated system. The table was not large and the seats were soon occupied. Villager after villager made his appearance and taken his place without calling for observation; and, indeed, so busily were all employed, that he who should have made his entrée at such a time with an emphasis commanding notice, might, not without reason, have been set aside as truly and indefensibly impertinent. So no one would have thought, not employed in like manner surveying the prospect. Forrester alone seemed to be less selfish than those about him, our hero found his attentions at times rather pleasant and provoking. Whatever in the eye of estimation of the woodman seemed attractive, he

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"Find you not this place lonesome, Miss Munro? You have been used, or I mistake much, to a more cheering, a more civilized region."

"I have, sir, and sometimes I repine—no more at the world I live in, as for the world I have lost. Had I those about me with whom my early years were passed, the lonely situation and the little circle would trouble me slightly."

She uttered these words with a sorrowful voice, and the moisture gathered around the blue sphere which derived additional brightness from its proximity. The youth, after a passing and commonplace remark upon the vast difference upon the heart between moral and physical privations, went on—

"Perhaps, Miss Munro, with a true knowledge of all the conditions of life, there may be something of little philosophy in the tears we shed at such variations. The fortune that is unavoidable, however, I have always found the more deplorable the better reason. I shall have to watch well, that I too be not surprised with regrets of a like nature with your own, since I find myself recurring naturally to a world which perhaps I shall have more to do with."

Rising from her seat, and leaving the room, she spoke, with a smile of studied gayety upon her countenance, full also of earnestness and a significance of manner that awakened surprise in the person addressed, the maiden replied—

"Let me suggest, sir, that you observe well the world you are in; and do not forget, in recurring to that which you leave, that while deploring the loss of friends in the one you may be unconscious of enemies which surround you in the other. Perhaps, sir, you will find my philosophy in this particular the most useful, if not the most agreeable."

Wondering at her language, which, though of general remark, and fairly deducible from the conversation, he could not avoid referring to a peculiar origin, the youth rose, and bowed with respectful courtesy as she retired. His eye followed her form for an instant, while his meditations momentarily wrapped themselves up more and more in inextricable mysteries, from which his utmost ingenuity of thought failed entirely to disentangle him. In a maze of conjecture he passed from the room into the passage adjoining, and, taking advantage of its long range, promenaded with steps, and a spirit, now moody and uncertain. In a little time he was joined by Forrester, who seemed solicitous to divert his mind and relieve his melancholy, by describing the country round, the pursuits, characters and conditions of the people—the habits of the miners, and the productiveness of their employ, in a manner inartificial and modest, and sometimes highly entertaining. While engaged in this way, the eye of Ralph caught the look of Rivers, again fixed upon him from the doorway leading into the great hall; and without a moment's hesitation, with impetuous step, he advanced towards him, determined on some explanation of that curious interest which had become offensive; but when he approached him with this object the individual sought hastily left the passage. Taking Forrester's arm, Ralph also left the house, in the hope to encounter him in the neighbourhood; but failing in this, they proceeded to examine the village, or such portions of it as might be surveyed without too much fatigue to the wounded man—whose hurts, though superficial, might by imprudence become troublesome. They rambled till the sun went down, and at length returned to the tavern. This building, as we have elsewhere said, was of

the very humblest description, calculated, it would seem, rather for a temporary and occasional than a lasting shelter. Its architecture, compared with that even of the surrounding log houses of the country generally, was excessively rude; its parts were out of all relative proportion, fitted seemingly by an eye the most indifferent, and certainly without any, the most distant regard, to square and compass. It consisted of two stories, the upper being assigned to the sleeping apartments. Each floor contained four rooms, accessible all, independently of one another, by entrances from a great passage, running both above and below, through the centre of the structure. In addition to the main building, a shed in the rear of the main work afforded four other apartments, rather more closely constructed and in somewhat better finish than the rest of the structure: these were in the occupation of the family exclusively. The logs, in this work, were barbarously uneven, and hewn only to a degree barely sufficient to permit of a tolerable level when placed one upon the other. Morticed together at the ends, so very loosely had the work been done, that a timid observer, and one not accustomed to the survey of such fabrics, might entertain many misgivings of its security when one of those severe hurricanes were raging which in some seasons of the year so dreadfully desolate the southern and southwestern country. Chimneys of clay and stone intermixed, of the rudest fashion, projected from the two ends of the building, threatening, with the toppling aspect which they wore, the careless wayfarer; and leaving it something more than doubtful whether the oblique and outward direction which they took was not the result of a wise precaution against a degree of contiguity with the fabric they were meant to warm, which, from the

liberal fires of the pine woods, might have proved unfavourable to the protracted existence of either. The interior of the building aptly accorded with its outline. It was unceiled, and the rude March winds were only excluded from access through the interstices between the remotely allied logs, by the free use of the soft clay easily attainable in all that range of country. The light on each side of the building was received through the medium of a few small windows, one of which only was allotted to each apartment, and this was generally found to possess as many, and perhaps as fully secure modes of fastening as those of the jail opposite—a precaution referable to the great dread of the Indian outrages, and which their near neighbourhood and irresponsible and vicious habits were well calculated to inspire. The furniture of the hotel amply accorded with all the other features of the Chestatee Public. A single large and two small tables—a few old oaken chairs, of domestic manufacture, with bottoms made of the ox or deer skin, tightly drawn over the seat, and either tied below with small cords or tacked upon the sides—a broken mirror, that stood ostentatiously over the mantel, surmounted in turn by a well-smoked picture of the Washington family, in a tarnished gilt frame, asserting the Americanism of the proprietor and place—completed the contents of the great hall, and was a fair specimen of what might be found in all the other apartments. The tavern itself, in reference to the obvious pursuit of many of those who made it their home, was entitled the ‘Golden Egg’—a title made sufficiently notorious to the spectator, from a huge signboard, elevated some eight or ten feet above the building itself, bearing upon a light blue ground a monstrous egg of the deepest yellow, the effect of which was duly

heightened by a strong and thick shading of sable all round it—the artist, in this way, calculating no doubt to afford the object so encircled its legitimate relief. Lest, however, his design in the painting itself should be at all questionable, he had taken the wise precaution of showing what he meant by printing the words “Golden Egg,” in huge Roman letters beneath it—these, in turn, being placed above another inscription, running, “Entertainment for man and horse.”

But the night had now closed in and coffee was in progress. Ralph took his seat with the rest of the lodgers of the “Golden Egg,” though without partaking of the feast. Rivers did not make his appearance, much to the chagrin of the youth, who was excessively desirous to account for the curious observance of this man. He had some notion besides that the former was not utterly unknown to him; for though unable to identify him with any one recollection, his features (what could be seen of them) were certainly not altogether unfamiliar. After supper, requesting Forrester’s company in his chamber, he left the company, not however without a few moments of chat with Lucy Munro and her aunt, conducted with some spirit by the former, and seemingly much to the satisfaction of all. As they left the room, Ralph spoke :

“I am not now disposed for sleep, Forrester, and if you please, I should be glad to hear further about your village and the country at large. Something, too, I would like to know of this man Rivers, whose face strikes me as one that I should know, and whose eyes have been haunting me to-day rather more frequently than I altogether like, or shall be willing to submit to. Give me an hour,

then, if not fatigued, in my chamber, and we will talk over these matters together."

"Well, 'squire, that's just what pleases me now. I like good company, and 'twill be more satisfaction to me, I reckon, than to you. As for fatigue, that's out of the question. Somehow or other, I never feel fatigued when I've got somebody to talk to."

"With such a disposition, I wonder, Forrester, you have not been more intimate with the young lady of the house. Miss Lucy seems quite an intelligent girl, well-behaved and virtuous."

"Why, 'squire, she is all that; but though modest and not proud, as you may see, yet she's a little above my mark. She is book-learned, and I am not; and she paints, and is a musician too, and has all the accomplishments. She was an only child, and her father was quite another sort of person from his brother who now has her in management."

"She is an orphan, then?"

"Yes, poor girl, and she feels pretty clearly that this isn't the sort of country in which she has a right to live. I like her very well, but, as I say, she's a little above me; and besides, you must know, 'squire, I'm rather fixed in another quarter."

They had now reached the chamber of our hero, and the servant having placed the light and retired, the parties took seats, and the conversation recommenced.

"I know not how it is, Forrester," said the youth, "but there are few men whose looks I so little like, and whom I would more willingly avoid, than that man Rivers. What he is I know not—but I dislike his face. I may be doing wrong to the man, and injustice to his character; but, really, his eye strikes me as singularly malicious, almost murder-

ous ; and though not apt to shrink from men at any time, it provoked something of a shudder to-day when it met my own, which I was most heartily ashamed of, but which I could not well prevent. He may be, and perhaps you may be able to say, whether he is a worthy person or not—for my part, I should only regard him as one to be watched jealously and carefully avoided. There is something creepingly malignant in the look which shoots out from his eyes, like that of the rattlesnake, when coiled and partially concealed in the brake. When I looked upon this man's eye, as it somewhat impertinently singled me out for observation, I almost felt disposed to lift my heel as if the venomous reptile were crawling under it."

"You are not the only one, 'squire, that's afraid of Guy Rivers."

"Afraid of him ! you mistake me, Forrester ; I fear no man—" replied the youth, somewhat hastily interrupting the woodman. "I am not apt to fear, and certainly have no such feeling in relation to this person. I distrust, and would avoid him, merely as one, who, while possessing none of the beauty, may yet have many of the propensities and some of the poison of the snake to which I likened him."

"Well, squire, I didn't use the right word, that's certain, when I said afraid, you see ; because 't'ant in Carolina and Georgia, and hereabouts that cowards grow well, or men are apt to get frightened at trifles. But, as you say, Guy Rivers is not the man, and everybody here knows it, and keeps clear of him. None care to say much to him except when it's a matter of necessity, and then they say as little as may be. Nobody knows much about him—he is here to-day and gone to-morrow—and we never see much of him except when

there's some mischief afoot. He is thick with Munro, and they keep together at all times I believe; he has money, and knows how to spend it. Where he gets it, is quite another thing."

"What can be the source of the intimacy between himself and Munro? Is he interested in the hotel?"

"Why, I can't say for that, but I think not. The fact is, the tavern is nothing to Munro; he don't care a straw about it, and some among us do whisper, that he only keeps it a-going as a kind of cover and apology for other practices. There's no doubt that they drive some trade together, though what it is I can't say, and never gave myself much trouble to inquire. I can tell you what though, there's no doubt on my mind that he's trying to get Miss Lucy—they say he's fond of her—but I know for myself she hates and despises him, and don't stop to let him see it."

"She will not have him then, you think?"

"I know she won't if she can help it. But, poor girl, what can she do? she's at the mercy, as you may say, of Munro, who is her father's brother—and he don't care a straw for her likes or dislikes. If he says the word, I reckon she can have nothing to say which will help her much out of the difficulty. I'm sure he wont regard prayers, or tears, or any of her objections."

"It's a sad misfortune to be forced into connexion with one in whom we may not confide—whom we can have no sympathy with—whom we cannot love!"

"'Tis so, squire—and that's just her case, and she hates to see the very face of him, and avoids him whenever she can do so, without giving offence to her uncle, who, they say, has spoke to and threatened her bitterly about the scornful treat-

when shown in such broad contrast with those of his associates; and, without any other assurance of their possession by Forrester than the sympathies already referred to, he was not unwilling to recognise their existence in his person. That he came from the same part of the world, and that himself may also have had its effect—the manner, particularly, indeed, as the pride of birth-place was evidently a consideration with the woodman, and the praises of Carolina were rung along with his own, in every variety of change, through almost all his speeches.

The youth sat musing for some time after the departure of Forrester. He was evidently employed in chewing the cud of sweet and bitter thought, and referring to memories deeply imbued with the closely associated taste of both these extremes. After a while, the weakness of his heart got seemingly the mastery, long battling with; and tearing open his vest, he displayed a massive gold chain circling his bosom in repeated folds, upon which hung the small locket containing Edith's and his own miniature. Looking over his shoulder, as he gazed upon it, we were enabled to see the fair features of that sweet young girl, just entering her womanhood—her blue eyes, her streaming hair, the cheek delicately pale, enlivened with a southern fire, that seems not properly borrowed from the warm eyes that glowed above it. The ringlets gather in amorous clumps upon her shoulder, and half obscure a neck and bosom of the purest and most polished ivory. The artist had caught from his subject something of inspiration, and the rounded bust seemed to be before the sight, as if impregnated with the purest and sweetest life. The youth carried the semblance to his lips, and muttered words of

and reproach so strangely intermingled and in unison, that, could she have heard to whom they were seemingly addressed, it might have been difficult to have determined the difference of signification between them. Gazing upon it long, and in silence, a large but solitary tear gathered in his eye, and finally finding its way through his fingers, rested upon the lovely features that appeared never heretofore to have been conscious of such a cloud. As if there had been something of impiety and pollution in this blot upon so fair an outline, he hastily brushed it away; then pressing the features again to his lips, he hurried the jewelled token again into his bosom, and prepared himself for those slumbers upon which we forbear longer to intrude.

CHAPTER X.

—“I grant him bloody,
Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful,
Sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin
That has a name.”

Macbeth.

WHILE this brief scene was in progress in the chamber of Ralph, another, not less full of interest to that person, was passing in the neighbourhood of the village tavern; and, as this portion of our narrative yields some light which must tend greatly to our own, and the instruction of the reader, we propose briefly to record it. It will be remembered, that, in the chapter preceding, we found the attention of the youth forcibly attracted towards one Guy Rivers—an attention the result

of various influences—producing in the mind of the youth a degree of antipathy towards that person for which he himself could not, nor did we, seek to account. It appears that Ralph was not less the subject of consideration with the individual in question. We have seen the degree and kind of espionage which the former had felt at one time disposed to resent; and how he was defeated in his design by the sudden withdrawal of the obnoxious presence. On his departure with Forrester from the gallery, Rivers reappeared—his manner that of doubt and excitement; and after, for a brief interval, hurrying with uncertain steps up and down the apartment, he passed hastily into the adjoining hall, where sat the landlord smoking and drinking and expatiating at large to his guests, upon some topic which need not more particularly be referred to here. Whispering something in his ear, he rose, and the two proceeded from the rear of the building into the adjoining copse, at a point as remote as possible from hearing, when the explanation of this mysterious course of caution was thus begun by Rivers.

“Well, Munro, we are like to have fine work with your accursed and blundering good-nature. Why did you not refuse lodgings to this youngster? Are you ignorant who he is? Do you not know him?”

“Know him?—no, I know nothing about him. He seems a clever, good-looking lad, and I see no harm in him. What is it frightens you?” was the reply and inquiry of the landlord.

“Nothing frightens me, as you know, by this time, or should know at least. But, if you know not the young fellow himself, you should certainly not be at a loss to know the creature he rides; for it is not long since your heart was greatly taken

with him. He is the youth we set upon at the Catcheta Pass, where your backwardness and my forwardness got me this badge—it has not yet ceased to bleed—the marks of which promise fairly to last me to my grave.”

As he spoke he raised the handkerchief which bound his cheeks, and exposed to view a deep gash, not of a serious character indeed, but which, as the speaker asserted, would most probably result in a mark which would last him his life. The exposure of the face confirms the first and unfavourable impression which we have already received from his appearance, and all that we have any occasion now to add in this respect will be simply, that, though not beyond the prime of life, there were ages of guilt, of vexed and vexatious strife, unregulated pride, without aim or elevation, a lurking malignity, and hopeless discontent—all embodied in the fiendish and fierce expression which that single glimpse developed to the spectator. He went on—

“Had it been your lot to have been in my place, I should not now have to tell you who he is; nor should we have had any apprehensions of his crossing our path again. But so it is. You are always the last to your place—had you kept your appointment, we should have had no difficulty, and I should have escaped the mortification of being foiled by a mere stripling, and almost stricken to death by the heel of his horse.”

“And all your own fault and folly, Guy. What business had you to advance upon the fellow, as you did, before every thing was ready, and when we could have brought him, without any risk whatever, into the snare, from which nothing could have got him out. But no! you must be at your old tricks of the law—You must make speeches

before you cut purses, as was your practice when I first knew you at Gwinnett County-Court; a practice which you seem not able to get over. You have got into such a trick of making fun of people, that, for the life of me, I can't be sorry that the lad has turned the tables so handsomely upon you."

"You would no doubt have enjoyed the scene with far more satisfaction, had the fellow's shot taken its full effect on my scull—since, besides the failure of our object, you have such cause of merriment in what has been done. If I did go something too much ahead in the matter, it is but simple justice to say you were quite as much aback."

"Perhaps so, Guy; but the fact is, I was right and you wrong, and the thing's beyond dispute. This lesson, though a rough one, will do you service; and a few more such will perhaps cure you of that vile trick you have of spoiling not only your own, but the sport of others, by running your scull into unnecessary danger; and since this youth, who got out of the scrape so handsomely, has beat you at your own game, it may cure you of that cursed itch for tongue-trifling, upon which you so much pride yourself. 'Twould have done, and it did, very well at the County Sessions, in getting men out of the wood; but as you have commenced a new business entirely, it's but well to leave off the old, particularly as it's now your policy to get them into it."

"I shall talk as I please, Munro, and see not why, and care not whether, my talk offends you or not. I parleyed with the youth only to keep him in play until your plans could be put in operation."

"Very good—that was all very well, Guy—and had you kept to your intention, the thing would have done. But he replied smartly to your speeches, and your pride and vanity got to work.

You must answer smartly and sarcastically in turn, and you see what's come of it. You forgot the knave in the wit ; and the mistake was incurable. Why tell him that you wanted to pick his pocket, and perhaps cut his throat ?”

“ That was a blunder, I grant ; but the fact is, I entirely mistook the man. Besides, I had a reason for so doing, which it is not necessary to speak about now.”

“ Oh, ay—it wouldn't be lawyer-like if you hadn't a reason for every thing, however unreasonable,” was the retort.

“ Perhaps not, Munro ; but this is not the matter now. Our present object must be to put this youth out of the way. We must silence suspicion, for, though we are pretty much beyond the operation of law in this region, yet now and then a sheriff's officer takes off some of the Club ; and as I think it is always more pleasant to be out of than in the halter, I am clear for making the thing certain in the only practicable way. Would you believe it, this boy of whom we speak, as if in the way of prediction, actually offered me a shilling to procure a cravat from Kentucky ?”

“ A plague upon his impudence, say I. But, are you sure that he is the man. I should know his horse and shall look to him, for he's a fine creature and I should like to secure him ; which I think will be the case if you are not dreaming as usual.”

“ I am sure—I do not mistake.”

“ Well, I'm not, and I should like to hear what it is you know him by,” returned the landlord.

A deeper and more malignant expression overspread the face of Rivers, as with a voice in which his thought vainly struggled for mastery with a vexed spirit, he replied :

"What have I to know him by, you ask? know him by many things—and when I told you had my reason for talking with him as I did, might have added that he was known to me as fixed in my lasting memory by wrongs and injuries before. But there is enough in this for recollection," pointing again to his cheek—"This carries with it answer sufficient. You may value clear face slightly, having known none other than a blotted one since you have known your own, but I have a different feeling in this. He has written himself here, and the damned writing is perpetually and legibly before my eyes. He has put brand, a Cain-like, accursed brand upon my face, the language of which cannot be hidden from me, and yet you ask me if I know the executioner. Can I forget him? If you think so, Munro, you know but little of Guy Rivers."

The violence of his manner as he spoke was accorded with the spirit of what he said. The landlord, with much coolness and precision, replied—

"I confess I do know but little of him and have yet much to learn. If you have so little temper in your speech, I have chosen you badly as a confederate in employments which require so much of that quality. This gash, which, when healed, will be scarcely perceptible, you speak of with all the mortification of a young girl, to whom, indeed, such would be an awful injury. How long is it, Guy, since you have become so particularly solicitous of beauty, so proud of your face and features?"

"You will spare your sarcasm for another season, Munro, if you would not have strife. I am now in the mood to listen to much, even from you in the way of sneer or censure. Perhaps I am"

child in this, but I cannot be otherwise. Besides, I discover in this youth the person of one to whom I owe much in the growth of this very hell-heart, which embitters every thing about and within me. Of this, at another time, you shall hear more. Enough that I know this boy—that it is more than probable he knows me, and may bring us into difficulty—that I hate him, and will not rest satisfied until we are secure, and I have my revenge.”

“Well, well, be not impatient nor angry. Although I still doubt that the youth in the house is your late opponent, you may have suffered wrong at his hands, and you may be right in your conjecture.”

“I am right—I do not conjecture. I do not so readily mistake my man, and I was quite too near him on that occasion not to have seen every feature of that face, which, at another and an earlier day, could come between me and my dearest joys—but, why speak I of this. I know him: not to remember would be to forget that I am here; and that he was a part of that very influence which made me league, Munro, with such as you, and become a creature of, and a companion with, men whom even now I despise. I shall not soon forget his stern and haughty smile of scorn—his proud bearing—his lofty sentiment—all that I must admire—all that I do not possess—and when to-day he descended to dinner, guided by that meddling booby Forrester, I knew him at a glance. I should know him among ten thousand.”

“It is to be hoped that he will have no such memory. I can’t see, indeed, how he should recognise either of us. Our disguises were complete. Your whiskers taken off, leave you as far from any resemblance to what you were in that affair, as any two men can well be from one another; and I

am perfectly satisfied he has little knowledge of me."

"How should he?" retorted the other. "The better part of valour saved you from all risk of danger or discovery alike; but the case is different with me. It may be that enjoying the happiness which I have lost, he has forgotten the now miserable object that once dared to aspire—but no matter—it may be that I am forgotten by him—he can never be by me." This speech, which had something in it vague and purposeless to the mind of Munro, was uttered with gloomy emphasis, more as a soliloquy than a reply, by the speaker. His hands were passed over his eyes as if in agony, and his frame seemed to shudder at some remote recollection which had still the dark influence upon him. Munro was a dull man in all matters that belonged to the heart, and those impulses which characterize souls of intelligence and ambition. He observed the manner of his companion, but said nothing in relation to it; and the latter, unable to conceal altogether, or to suppress even partially his emotions, did not deign to enter into any explanation in regard to them.

"Does he suspect any thing yet, Guy, think you?—have you seen any thing which might sanction a thought that he knew or conjectured more than he should?" inquired Munro, anxiously.

"I will not say that he does, but he has the perception of a lynx—he is an apt man, and his eyes have been more frequently upon me to-day than I altogether relish or admire. It is true mine were upon him—as how, indeed, if death were in the look, could I have kept them off! I caught his glance frequently; turning upon me with that stern, still expression, indifferent and insolent—as if he cared not even while he surveyed. I remem-

ber that glance three years ago, when he was indeed a boy—I remembered it when, but a few days since, he struck me to the earth, and would have ridden me to death with the hoofs of his horse but for your timely appearance.”

“It may be as you believe, Guy; but, as I saw nothing in his manner or countenance affording ground for such a belief, I cannot but conceive it to have been because of the activity of your suspicions that you discovered his. I did not perceive that he looked upon you with more curiosity than upon any other at table; though, if he had done so, I should by no means have been disposed to wonder; for at this time, and since your face has been so tightly bandaged, you have a most villainously attractive visage. It carries with it, though you do regard it with so much favour, a full and satisfactory reason for observance, without rendering necessary any reference to any more serious matter than itself. On the road, I take it, he saw quite too little of either of us to be able well to determine what was what, or who was who, either then or now. The passage was dark, our disguises good, and the long hair and monstrous whiskers which you wore did the rest. I have no apprehensions and see not that you need have any.”

“I would not rest in this confidence—let us make sure that if he knows any thing he shall say nothing,” was the significant reply of Rivers.

“Guy, you are too fierce and furious. When there’s a necessity, do you see, for using teeth, you know me to be always ready; but I will not be for ever at this sort of work. If I were to let you have your way you’d bring the whole country down upon us. There will be time enough when we see a reason for it to tie up this young man’s tongue.”

"I see—I see!—you are ever thus—ever risking our chance upon contingencies when you might build strongly upon certainties. You are perpetually trying the strength of the rope, when a like trouble would render it a sure hold-fast. Rather than have the possibility of this thing being blabbed I would—"

"Hush—hark!" said Munro, placing his hand upon the arm of his companion, and drawing him deeper into the copse, at the moment that Forrester, who had just left the chamber of Ralph emerged from the tavern into the open air. The outlaw had not placed himself within the shadow of the trees in time sufficient to escape the searching gaze of the woodman, who, seeing the movement and only seeing one person, leaped nimbly forward with a light footstep and speaking as he approached:—

"Hello! there—who's that—the pedler, sure.—Have at you, Bunce!" seizing as he spoke the arm of the retreating figure who briefly and sternly addressed him as follows:

"It is well, Mr. Forrester, that he you have taken in hand is almost as quiet in temper as the pedler you mistake him for, else your position might prove uncomfortable. Take your fingers from my arm, if you please."

"Oh, it's you, Guy Rivers—and you here too, Munro, making love to one another, I reckon, for want of better stuff. Well, who'd have thought to find you two squatting here in the bushes! Would you believe it now, I took you for the Yankee—not meaning any offence though."

"As I am not the Yankee, however, Mr. Forrester, you will, I suppose, withdraw your hand," said the other, with a manner sufficiently haughty for the stomach of the person addressed.

"Oh, to be sure, since you wish it, and are not the pedler," returned the other, with a manner rather looking, in the country phrase, to "a squaring off for a fight"—"but you needn't be so gruff about it. You are on business, I suppose, and so I leave you."

"A troublesome fool, who is disposed to be insolent," said Rivers, after Forrester's departure.

"Damn him!" was the exclamation of that worthy, on leaving the copse—"I feel very much like putting my fingers on his throat; and shall do it, too, before he gets better manners!"

The dialogue between the original parties was resumed.

"I tell you again, Munro—it is not by any means the wisest policy to reckon and guess and calculate that matters will go on smoothly, when we have it in our own power to make them certainly go on so. We must leave nothing to guess work, and a single blow will readily teach this youth the proper way to be quiet."

"Why, what do you drive at, Guy. What would you do—what should be done?"

"Beef—beef—beef!—mere beef! How dull you are to-night! were you in yon gloomy and thick edifice (pointing to the prison which frowned in the perspective before them), with irons on your hands, and with the prospect, through its narrowly-grated loop-holes, of the gallows tree, at every turning before you, it might be matter of wonder even to yourself that you should have needed any advice by which to avoid such a risk and prospect."

"Look you, Guy—I stand in no greater danger than yourself of the prospect of which you speak. The subject is, at best, an ugly one, and I do not care to hear it spoken of by you, above all other people. If you want me to talk civilly with you, you must learn yourself to keep a civil tongue in your

head. I don't seek to quarrel with anybody, *but* I will not submit to be threatened with the penalties of the rogue by one who is a damned sight greater rogue than myself."

"You call things by their plainest names, Wat, at least," said the other, with a tone moderated duly for the purpose of soothing down the bristles he had made to rise—"But you mistake me quite. I meant no threat; I only sought to show how much we were at the mercy of a single word from a wanton and headstrong youth. I will not say confidently that he remembers me, but he had some opportunities for seeing my face, and looked into it closely enough. I can meet any fate with fearlessness, but should rather avoid it, at all risks, when it's in my power to do so."

"You are too suspicious, quite, Guy, even for our business. I am older than you, and have seen something more of the world: suspicion and caution is not the habit with young men like this. They are free enough, and confiding enough, and in this lies our success. It is only the old man—the experienced in human affairs, that looks out for traps and pitfalls. It is for the outlaw—for you and I, to suspect all—to look with fear even upon one another, when a common interest, and perhaps a common fate, ought to bind us together. This being our habit, arising as it must from our profession, it is natural but not reasonable to refer a like spirit to all other persons. We are wrong in this, and you are wrong in regard to this youth—not that I care to save him, for if he but looks or winks awry, I shall silence him myself, without speech or stroke from you being necessary. But I do not think he made out your features, and do not think he looked for them. He had no time for it, after the onset, and you were well enough dis-

guised before. If he had made out any thing, he would have shown it to-night; but, saving a little stiffness, which belongs to all these young men from Carolina, I saw nothing in his manner that looked at all out of the way."

"Well, Munro, you are bent on having the thing as you please. You will find, when too late, that your counsel will end in having us all in a hobble."

"Pshaw—you are growing old and timid since this adventure. You begin to doubt your own powers of defence. You find your arguments failing; and you fear that, when the time comes, you will not plead with your old spirit, though for the extrication of your own instead of the neck of your neighbour."

"Perhaps so—but, if there be no reason for apprehension, there is something due to me in the way of revenge. Is the fellow to hurl me down, and trench my cheek in this manner, and escape without hurt."

The eyes of the speaker glared with a deadly fury, as he indicated in this sentence the true motive for his persevering hostility to Colleton—an hostility for which, as subsequent passages will show, he had even a better stimulant than the unpleasing wound in his face; which, nevertheless, was in itself, strange as it may appear, a considerable eye-sore to its proprietor. Munro evidently understood this only in part; and, unaccustomed to attribute a desire to shed blood to any other than a motive of gain or safety, and without any idea of a mortified pride or passion being productive of a thirst unaccountable to his mind, except in this manner—he proceeded thus, in a sentence, the dull simplicity of which only the more provoked the ire of his companion—

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"What do you think to do, Guy—what recompense would you seek to have—what would satisfy you?"

The hand of Rivers grasped convulsively that of the questioner as he spoke, his eyes were protruded closely into his face, his voice was thick, choking and husky, and his words tremulous, as he replied,

"His blood—his blood!"

The landlord started back with undisguised horror from his glance. Though familiar with scenes of violence and crime, and callous in their performance, there was more of the Mammon than the Moloch in his spirit, and he shuddered at the fiend-like look that met his own. The other proceeded:—

"The trench in my cheek is nothing to that within my soul. I tell you, Munro, I hate the boy—I hate him with a hatred that must have a tiger-draught from his veins, and even then will not be satisfied. But why talk I to you thus, when he is almost in my grasp, and there is neither let nor hinderance? Sleeps he not in yon room to the north-east?"

"He does, Guy,—but it must not be. I must not risk all for your passion, which seems to me as weak as it is without adequate provocation. I care nothing for the youth, and you know it; but I will not run the thousand risks which your temper is for ever bringing upon me. There is nothing to be gained, and a great deal to be lost by it, at this time. As for the scar—that, I think, is fairly a part of the business, and is not properly a subject of personal revenge. It belongs to the adventure, and you should not have engaged in it, without a due reference to its possible consequences."

"You shall not keep me back by such obstacles

as these. Do I not know how little you care for the risk—how little you can lose by it.”

“True, I can lose little, but I have other reasons; and however it may surprise you, those reasons spring from a desire for your good, rather than my own.”

“For my good?” replied the other, with an inquiring sneer.

“Yes, for your good, or rather for Lucy’s. You wish to marry her. She is a sweet child, and an orphan. She merits a far better man than you; and bound as I am to give her to you, I am deeply bound to myself and to her, to make you as worthy of her as possible, and to give her as many chances for happiness as I can.”

An incredulous smile played for a second upon the lips of the outlaw, succeeded quickly however by the savage expression, which, from being that most congenial to his feelings, had become that most habitual to his face.

“I cannot be deceived by words like these,” was his reply, as he stepped quickly from under the boughs which had sheltered them and made towards the house.

“Think not to pursue this matter, Guy, on your life. I will not permit it—not now, at least, if I have to strike for the youth myself.” Thus spoke the landlord, as he advanced in the same direction. Both were deeply roused, and, though not reckless alike, Munro was a man quite as decisive in character as his companion was ferocious and vindictive. What might have been the result of their present position, had it not undergone a new interruption, might not well be foreseen. The sash of one of the apartments in that part of the building devoted to the family was suddenly thrown up, and a soft and plaintive voice, accompanying

the wandering and broken strains of a guitar, sweetly into song upon the ear.

"'Tis Lucy—the poor girl! Stay, Guy, and her music. She does not often sing now-a-days. She is quite melancholy, and it's a long time I've heard her guitar. She sings and plays sweetly—her poor father had her taught every thing before he failed, for he was very proud of her, as he might be."

They sunk again into the covert, the one muttering sullenly at the interruption which came between him and his purposes. The note touched him not, for he betrayed no consciousness when, after a few brief preliminary notes on the instrument, the musician breathed forth words like those which follow.

LUCY'S SONG.

I.

I met thy glance of scorn,
And then my anguish slept,
But, when the crowd was gone,
I turned away and wept.

II.

I could not bear the frown
Of one who thus could move,
And feel that all my fault,
Was only too much love.

III.

I ask not if thy heart
Hath aught for mine in store,
Yet, let me love thee still,
If thou canst yield no more.

IV.

Let me unhidden gaze,
Still, on the heaven I see,
Although its happy rays
Be all denied to me.

A broken line of the lay, murmured at intervals or a few minutes after the entire piece was concluded, as it were in soliloquy, indicated the sad spirit of the minstrel. She did not remain long at the window—in a little while the light was withdrawn from the apartment and the sash let down. The musician had retired.

"They say, Guy, that music can quiet the most violent spirit, and it seems to have had its influence upon you. Does she not sing like a mocking-bird—is she not a sweet, a true creature? Why, man! so forward and furious but now, and now so lifeless: bestir ye! The night wanes."

The person addressed started from his stupor, and, as if utterly unconscious of what had been going on, *ad interim*, actually replied to the speech of his companion made a little while prior to the appearance and music of the young girl, whose presence at that moment had most probably prevented strife and possibly bloodshed. He spoke as if the interruption had made only a momentary break in the sentence which he now concluded:—"He lies at the point of my knife, under my hands, within my power, without chance of escape, and I am to be held back—kept from striking—kept from my revenge—and for what? There may be little gain in the matter—it may not bring money, and there may be some risk! If it be with you, Munro, to have neither love nor hate, but what you do, to do only for the profit and spoil that comes of it, it is not so with me. I can both love and hate; though it be, as it has been, that I entertain the one feeling in vain, and am restrained from the enjoyment of the other."

"You were born in a perverse time, and are querulous, for the sake of the noise it makes," rejoined his cool companion. "I do not desire to

restrain your hands from this young man, but tal your time for it. Let nothing be done to him whi in this house. I will run, if I can help it, no mo risk for your passions; and I must confess mys anxious, if the devil will let me, of stopping rig short in the old life and beginning a new one. have been bad enough, and done enough to kee me at my prayers all the rest of my days, were to live on to eternity."

"This new spirit, I suppose, we owe to you visit to the last camp-meeting. You will exhoi doubtless, yourself, before long, if you keep th track. Why, what a prophet you will mak among the crop-haired, Munro?—what a brar from the burning!"

"Look you, Guy—your sarcasm pleases n quite as little as it did the young fellow, who pa it back so much better than I can. Be wise, if yc please, while you are wary—if your words co continue to come from the same nest, they will beg something more than words, my good fellow."

"True, and like enough, Munro, and why d you provoke me to say them?" replied River something more sedately; "you see me in a pa sion—you know that I have cause—for is not th cause enough—this vile scar on features, now hic eous, that were once surely not unpleasing." A he spoke he dashed his fingers into the wound which he still seemed pleased to refer to, thoug the reference evidently brought with it bitterne and mortification. He proceeded—his passic again rising predominant—

"Shall I spare the wretch whose ministry d faced them—shall I not have revenge on him wh first wrote villain there—who branded me as a accursed thing, and among things bright a beautiful gave me the badge, the blot, the hee

stamp due the serpent. Shall I not have my atonement—my sacrifice—and shall you deny me—you, Walter Munro, who owe it to me in justice?"

"I owe it to you, Guy—how?" inquired the other, with something like amazement in his countenance.

"You taught me first to be the villain you now find me. You first took me to the haunts of your own accursed and hell-educated crew. You taught me all their arts—their contrivances—their lawlessness and crime. You encouraged my own deformities of soul till they became monsters, and my own spirit such a monster that I knew it not—I could see it not. You put the weapon into my hand, and taught me its use. You put me on the scent of blood and bade me lap it. I will not pretend that I was not ready and pliable enough to your hands. There was, I feel, little difficulty in moulding me to your own measure. I was an apt scholar, and soon ceased to be the subordinate villain. I was your companion, and too valuable to you to be lost or left. When I acquired new views of man, and began, in another sphere, that new life to which you would now turn your own eyes—when I grew strong among men, and famous, and public opinion grew enamoured with the name which your destiny compelled me to exchange for another, you sought me out—you thrust your enticements upon me; and, in an hour of gloom and defeat and despondency, you seized upon me with those claws of temptation which are even now upon my shoulders, and I gave up all—I made the sacrifice—name, fame, honour, troops of friends—for what? Answer you—You are rich—you own slaves in abundance—secure from your own fortunes, you have wealth hourly increasing. What have I? This scar, this brand,

that sends me among men no longer the doubtful villain—the words are written there in full !”

The speaker paused, exhausted. His face was pale and livid—his form trembled with convulsion—and his lips grew white and chalky, while quivering like a troubled water. The landlord, after a gloomy pause, replied :

“ You have spoken but the truth, Guy, and any thing that I can do—”

“ You will not do,” responded the other, passionately, and interrupting the speaker in his speech. “ You will do nothing. You ruin me in the love and esteem of those whom I love and esteem—you drive me into exile—you lead me into crime, and put me upon a pursuit which teaches me practices that brand me with man’s hate and fear, and—if the churchmen speak truth, which I believe not—with heaven’s eternal punishment. What have I left to desire but hate—blood—the blood of man—who, in driving me away from his dwelling, has made me an unrelenting enemy—his hand against me, and mine against him. While I had this pursuit, I did not complain—but you now interpose to deny me even this. The boy whom I hate, not merely because of his species, but in addition, with a hate incurred by himself, you protect from my vengeance, though affecting to be utterly careless of his fate—and all this you conclude with a profession of willingness to do for me whatever you can ! What miserable mockery is this !”

“ And have I done nothing, and am I seeking to do nothing for you, Guy, by way of atonement. Have I not pledged to you the person of my niece, the sweet young innocent, who is not unworthy to be the wife of the purest and proudest gentleman of the southern country. Is this nothing—is it nothing to sacrifice such a creature to such a

creature! For well I know what must be her fate when she becomes your wife. Well I know you! Vindictive, jealous, merciless, wicked, and fearless in wickedness—God help me, for it will be the very worst crime I have ever yet committed. These are all your attributes, and I know the sweet child will have to suffer from the perpetual exercise of all of them.”

“Perhaps so! and as she will then be mine she must suffer them if I so decree: but what avails your promise so long as you—in this matter a child yourself—suffer her to protract and put off at her pleasure. Me she receives with scorn and contempt, you with tears and entreaties, and you allow their influence—in the hope, doubtless, that some lucky chance—the pistol shot or the hangman’s collar—will rid you of my importunities. Is it not so, Munro?” said the ruffian, with a sneer of contemptuous bitterness.

“It would be, indeed, a lucky event for both of us, Guy, were you safely in the arms of your mother; though I have not delayed in this affair with any such hope. God knows I should be glad, on almost any terms, to be fairly free from your eternal croakings—never at rest, never satisfied, until at some new deviltry and ill deed. If I did give you the first lessons in your education, Guy, you have long since gone beyond your master; and I’m something disposed to think, that Old Nick himself must have taken up your tuition, where, from want of corresponding capacity, I was compelled to leave it off.”—And the landlord laughed at his own humour, in despite of the hyena glare shot forth from the eye of the savage he addressed. He continued—

“But, Guy, I’m not for you letting the youth off—that’s as you please. You have a grudge against

him, and may settle it to your own liking and in your own way. I have nothing to say to that. But I am determined to do as little henceforth towards hanging myself as possible; and, therefore, the thing must not take place here. Nor do I like that it should be done at all without some reason. When he blabs, there's a necessity for the thing, and self-preservation, you know, is the first law of nature. The case will then be as much mine as yours, and I'll lend a helping hand willingly."

"My object, Munro, is scarcely the same with yours. It goes beyond it; and whether he knows much or little, or speaks nothing or everything, it is still the same thing to me. I must have my revenge. But, for your own safety—are you bent on running the risk?"

"I am, Guy, rather than spill any more blood unnecessarily. I have already shed too much, and my dreams begin to trouble me as I get older," was the grave response of the landlord.

"And how, if he speaks out, and you have no chance either to stop his mouth or to run for it?"

"Who'll believe him, think you?—where's the proof? Do you mean to confess for both of us at the first question?"

"True—" said Rivers, "there would be a difficulty in conviction, but his oath would put us into some trouble."

"I think not—our people know nothing about him, and would scarcely lend much aid to have either of us turned upon our backs," replied Munro, without hesitation.

"Well, be it then as you say. There is yet another subject, Munro, on which I have just as little reason to be satisfied as this. How long will you permit this girl to trifle with us both? Why should you care for her prayers and pleadings—

or tears and entreaties? if you are determined on the matter, as I have your pledge, these are childish and unavailing; and the delay can have no good end, unless it be that you do in fact look, as I have said and as I sometimes think, for some chance to take me off and relieve you of my importunities and from your pledge."

"Look you, Guy, the child is my own twin-brother's only one, and a sweet creature it is. I must not be too hard with her; she begs time and I must give it."

"Why, how much time would she have?—heaven knows what she considers reasonable, or what you or I should call so; but to my mind she has had time enough, and more by far than I was willing to give her. You must bring her to her senses, or let me do so—to my thought, she is making fools of us both."

"It is enough, Guy, that you have my promise. She shall consent, and I will hasten the matter as fast as I can; but I will not drive her, nor will I be driven myself. Your love is not such a desperate affair as to burn itself out for the want of better fuel; and you can wait for the proper season. If I thought for a moment that you did or would have any regard for the child, and she could be happy, or even comfortable with you, I might push the thing something harder than I do; but as it stands, you must be patient. The fruit drops when it is ripe."

"Rather when the frost is on it, and the worms are in the core, and decay has progressed to rottenness. Speak you in this way to the hungry boy, whose eyes have long anticipated his appetite, and he may listen to you and be patient—I neither can nor will. Look to it, Munro: I will not much longer submit to be imposed upon."

"Nor I, Guy Rivers. You forget yourself greatly, and entirely mistake me, when you take these airs upon you. You are feverish now, and I will not suffer myself to grow angry; but be prudent in your speech. We shall see to all this to-morrow and the next day—there is quite time enough—when we are both cooler and calmer than at present. The night is something too warm for deliberation; and it is well we say no more on one subject till we learn the course of the other. The hour is late, and we had best retire. In the morning I shall ride to hear old Parson Witter, in company with the old woman and Lucy. Ride along with us, and we shall be able better to understand one another."

As he spoke, Munro emerged from the cover of the tree under which their dialogue had chiefly been carried on, and re-approached the dwelling, from which they had considerably receded. His companion lingered in the recess.

"I will be there," said Rivers, as they parted—"though I still propose a ride of a few miles to-night. My blood is hot, and I must quiet it with a gallop."

The landlord looked incredulous as he replied—"Some more deviltry—I will take a bet that the cross-roads see you in an hour."

"Not impossible," was the response, and the parties were both lost to sight—the one in the shelter of his dwelling, the other in the dim shadow of the trees which girdled it round.

CHAPTER XI.

"I worship'd in the desert, at his throne,—
For, in the wilderness and o'er the waste,
Among the hills, and germin'd in the groves,
The old groves of past ages, he was there,
And awed me like a god."

At an early hour of the ensuing morning, Ralph was aroused from his slumbers, which had been more than grateful from the extra degree of fatigue he had the day before undergone, by the appearance of Forrester, who accounted and apologized for the somewhat unseasonable nature of his visit, by bringing tidings of a preacher and of a preaching in the neighbourhood on that day. It was the Sabbath; and though, generally speaking, very far from being kept holy in that region, yet, as a day of repose from labour—a holyday in fact—it was observed, at all times, with more than religious scrupulosity. Such an event among the people of this quarter was always productive of a congregation. The occurrence being unfrequent, its importance was duly and necessarily increased in the estimation of those, the remote and insulated position of whom rendered all the constituencies of society primary and leading objects. No matter what the character of the auspices under which it was attained, they yearned for its associations, and gathered where they were to be enjoyed. A field preaching, too, is a legitimate amusement, and though not

intended as such, formed a genuine excuse and apology for those who desired it less for its teaching than its talk—who sought it less for the work which it brought of God, than that which it furnished from the world of man. It was a happy cover for those who, cultivating a human appetite and conscious of a human weakness, were solicitous, in respecting and providing for these, not offend the Creator in the presence of his creature.

The woodman, as one of this class, was full of glee, and promised Ralph an intellectual treat; and Parson Witter, the preacher in reference, had more than once, as he was pleased to acknowledge a phrase it, won his ears, and softened and delighted his heart. He was popular in the village and neighbourhood, and where regular pastor was none he might be considered to have made the strongest impression upon his almost primitive, and, certainly, only in part civilized, hearers. His merits of mind were held of rather an elevated order, and in standard far overtopping the current run of fellow-labourers in the same vineyard; while his own example was admitted, on all hands, to keep pace evenly with the precepts which he taught and to be not unworthy of the faith which he professed. He was of the Methodist persuasion—sect which, among those who have sojourned in the southern and western forests, may confidently claim to have done more, and with motives little questionable as any, towards the spread of civilization, good habits, and a proper moral among the great mass, than all other known sect put together. In a word, where men are remotely situated from one another, and cannot well afford to provide for an established place of worship and a regular pastor, their labours, valued at the lowest standard of human want, are in

preciable. We may add, that never did labourers more deserve, yet less frequently receive, their hire, than the preachers of this particular faith. Humble in habit, moderate in desire, indefatigable in well-doing, pure in practice and intention, without pretence or ostentation of any kind, they have gone freely and fearlessly into places the most remote and perilous, with an empty scrip, but with hearts filled to overflowing with love of God and good-will to men—preaching their doctrines with a simple and an unstudied eloquence, meetly characteristic of, and well adapted to, the old groves, deep primitive forests, and rudely barren wilds, in which it is their wont, most commonly, to give it utterance. Day after day, week after week, and month after month, finding them wayfarers still—never slumbering, never reposing from the toil they have engaged in, until they have fallen, almost literally, into the narrow grave by the wayside; their resting-place unprotected by any other mausoleum or shelter than those trees which have witnessed their devotions, their names and worth unmarked by any inscription; their memories, however, closely treasured up and carefully noted among human affections, and within the bosoms of those for whom their labours have been taken; while their reward, with a high ambition cherished well in their lives, is found only in that better abode where they are promised a cessation from their labours, but where their good works still follow them. This, without exaggeration applicable to the profession at large, was particularly due to the individual member in question; and among the somewhat savage and always wild people whom he exhorted, Parson Witter was in some cases an object of sincere affection, and in all commanded their respect.

As might readily be expected, the whole village and as much of the surrounding country as could well be apprized of the affair, was on the go and gather; and Colleton, now scarcely feeling his late injuries, an early breakfast having been discussed, mounted his horse, and under the guidance of his quondam friend, Forrester, took the meandering path, or, as they phrase it in those parts, the old trace, to the place of meeting and prayer.

The sight is something goodly, as well to the man of the world as to the man of God, to behold the fairly decked array of people, drawn from a circuit of some ten or even fifteen miles in extent, on the Sabbath, neatly dressed in their choicest apparel, men and women alike well mounted, and forming numerous processions and parties, from three to five or ten in each, bending from every direction to a given point, and assembling for the purposes of devotion. No chiming and chattering bells warn them of the day or of the duty—no regularly constituted and well-salaried priest—no time-honoured fabric, around which the old forefathers of the hamlet rest—reminding them regularly of the recurring Sabbath, and of the sweet assemblage of their fellows. The teacher is from their own impulses—and the heart calls them with a due solemnity to the festival of prayer. The preacher comes when the spirit prompts, or as circumstances may impel or permit. The news of his arrival passes from farm to farm, from house to house—placards announce it from the trees on the roadside, parallel, it may be, with an advertisement for, or of, strayed oxen, as we have seen it numberless times—and a day does not well elapse before it is in possession of everybody who might well avail themselves of its promise for the ensuing Sunday. The parson comes to the house of one of his au-

ditory a night or two before—messages and messengers are despatched to this and that neighbour, who despatch in turn—the negroes delighting in a service and occasion of the kind, in which, by-the-way, they generally make the most conspicuous figures, though somewhat sluggish, as couriers usually are now not merely ready but actually swift of foot. The place of worship and the preacher are duly designated, and by the time appointed, as if the bell had tolled for their enlightenment, the country assembles at the stated place, and though the preacher may sometimes fail of attendance, the people never do.

The spot appointed for the service of the day was an old grove of gigantic oaks, at a distance of some five or six miles from the village of Chetatee. The village itself had not been chosen, though having the convenience of a building, because of the liberal desire entertained by those acting on the occasion to afford to others living at an equal distance the same opportunities without additional fatigue. Besides, five or ten miles to a people to whom good horses were familiar things, did not call for a second consideration. The morning was a fine one, all gayety and sunshine—the road dry, elevated, and shaded luxuriantly with the overhanging foliage—the woods having the air of luxury and bloom which belonged to them at such a season, and the prospect, varied throughout by the wholesome undulations of valley and hill, which strongly marked the face of the country, greatly enlivened the ride to the eye of our young traveller. Every thing contributed to impart a cheering influence to his senses; and with spirits and a frame newly braced and invigorated, he felt the bounding motion of the steed beneath him with an animal exultation, which took from his countenance that

look of sullen melancholy which had hitherto clouded and obscured it. As they proceeded on their way, successive and frequent groups crossed their route, or fell into it from other roads—some capriciously taking the by-paths and Indian tracks through the woods, but all having the same object in view, and bending to the same point of assemblage. Here gayly pranced on a small cluster of the young of both sexes, laughing with unqualified glee at the jest of some of their companions—while in the rear, the more staid, the antiques and those rapidly becoming so, with more measured gait, paced on in suite. On the road-side, striding on foot with pace almost as rapid as that of the riders, came at intervals, and one after the other, the now trimly-dressed slaves of this or that plantation—all devoutly bent on the place of meeting. Some of the whites carried their double-barrelled guns, some their rifles—it being deemed politic, at that time, to prepare for all contingencies, for the Indian or for the buck, as well as for the more direct object of the journey. At length, in a rapidly approaching group, a bright but timid glance met that of the youth, and curbing in the impetuous animal which he rode, in a few moments he found himself side by side with Miss Munro, who answered his prettiest introductory compliment with a smile and speech, uttered with the grace so natural to her, and, as the romancers tell us, so characteristic of a dame of chivalry.

“We have a like object to-day, I presume,” was, after a few complimentary sentences, the language of Ralph—“yet,” he continued, “I fear me, our several impulses at this time scarcely so far resemble each other as to make it not discreditable to yours to permit of the comparison.”

“I know not what may be the motive which

is you, sir, to the course you take; but I not pretend to urge that, even in my own rights, my route is any more the result of a conviction of its high necessity than it may be yours—and the confession which I shame to make, is perhaps, of itself, a beginning of that very self-examination which we seek the church to make.”

Alas, Miss Lucy, even this was not in my thought, so much are we men ignorant of, or inattentive to, those things which are thought of so little of real importance. We seldom regard matters which are not of present enjoyment. The same is otherwise with you. There is far more to be learned, by my own experience tells me, in the profession of your sex, whether in love or in religion, than in ours—and believe me, I mean this as no compliment—I feel it to be true. The fact is, that society itself puts you into a sphere and condition, in which, taking from you much of your individuality, it makes you less exclusive in your affections, and more single in their exercise. Your existence is merged in that of the stronger sex, you lose that general selfishness which is the strict result of our pursuits. Your impulses are narrowed to a single point or two, and there all your hopes, and desires become concentrated. You have an intense susceptibility on a few subjects, by the loss of those manifold influences which belong to the out-door habit of mankind. Thus, we have so many resources to fly to in our grief—so many attractions to invite and soothe—so many resorts of luxury and life, that our affections become broken up in small—the grief is divided among the thousand; and, if one element suffers defeat or denial, why, the pang is only touched, and is perhaps unfelt by all the

rest. You have but few aims, few hopes. With these your very existence is bound up, and if you lose these you are yourselves lost. Thus I find that your sex, to a certain age, are creatures of love—disappointment invariably begets devotion—and either of these passions, for so they should be called, once brought into exercise, forbids and excludes every other.”

“Really, Mr. Colleton, you seem to have looked somewhat into the philosophy of this thing, and you may be right in the inferences to which you have come. On this point I may say nothing; but, do you conceive it altogether fair in you thus to compliment us at our own expense? You give us the credit of truth—a high eulogium, I grant—in matters which relate to the affections and the heart; but this is done by robbing us entirely of mental independence. You are a kind of generous outlaw—a moral Robin Hood—you compel us to give up every thing we possess, in order that you may have the somewhat equivocal merit of restoring back a small portion of what you take.”

“True, and this, I am afraid, Miss Lucy, however by the admission I forfeit for my sex the reputation for chivalry to which it universally lays so much claim, is after all the precise relationship between us. The very fact that the requisitions made by our sex produce immediate concession from yours, establishes the very dependence of which you complain.”

“You mistake me, sir. I complain not of the robbery—far from it; for, if we do lose the possession of a commodity so valuable, we are at least freed from the responsibility of keeping it. The gentlemen, now-a-days, seldom look to us for intellectual gladiatorship; they are content that our weakness should shield us from the war. But, I

conceive the reproach of our poverty to come unkindly from those who make us poor. It is of this, sir, that I complain."

"You are just, and justly severe, Miss Munro; but the fact is, what else have you to expect? Amazon-like, your sex, according to the quaint old story, sought the combat, and were not unwilling to abide the conditions of the warfare. The taunt is coupled with the triumph—the spoil follows the victory—and the captive is chained to the chariot-wheel of his conqueror, and must adorn the march of his superior by his own shame and sorrows. But, to be just to myself, permit me to say, that what you have considered a reproach was in truth designed as a compliment. I must regret that my modes of expression are so clumsy, that, in the transfer of my thought, the sentiment so changed its original shape as entirely to lose its identity and name. It certainly deserved the graceful swordsmanship which foiled it so completely."

"Nay, sir," said the now highly animated girl, "you are now bloodily-minded towards yourself, and it is matter of wonder to me how you survive your own rebuke. So far from erring in clumsy phrase, I am constrained to admit that I thought, and think you, excessively adroit and happy in its management. It was only with a degree of perversity, intended solely to establish our independence of opinion, at least, that I chose to mistake and misapprehend you. Your remark, clothed in any other language, could scarcely put on a form more consistent with your meaning."

Ralph bowed at a compliment which had something equivocal in it, and this branch of the conversation having reached its legitimate close, a pause of some few moments succeeded, when they found themselves joined by other parties, until they were

swollen in number to the goodly form of a cavalcade or caravan designed for a pilgrimage.

"Report speaks favourably of the preacher ~~we~~ are to hear to-day, Miss Munro—have you ever heard him?" was the inquiry of the youth.

"I have, sir, frequently, and have at all times been much pleased and sometimes affected by his preaching. There are few persons I would more desire to hear than himself—he does not offend your ears, nor assail your understanding by unmeaning thunders. His matter and manner, alike, are distinguished by the proprieties of modest good sense, a gentle and dignified ease and spirit, and a pleasing earnestness in his object that is never offensive. I think, sir, you will like him."

"Your opinion of him will certainly not diminish my attention, I assure you, to what he says," was the reply. At this moment the cavalcade was overtaken and joined by Rivers and Munro, together with several other villagers. Ralph now taking advantage of a suggestion of Forrester's previously made—who proposed, as there would be time enough, a circuitous and pleasant ride through a neighbouring valley—avoided the necessity of being in the company of one with respect to whom he had determined upon a course of the most jealous precaution. Turning their horses' heads, therefore, in the proposed direction, the two left the procession, and saw no more of its constituents until their common arrival at the secluded grove—druidically conceived for the present purpose—in which the teacher of a faith as simple as it was pleasant was already preparing to address them. The venerable oaks—a goodly and thickly clustering assemblage—forming a circle around, and midway upon a hill of gradual ascent, had left an opening in the centre, concealed from the

ye except when fairly penetrated by the spectar. Their branches, in most part meeting above, forded a roof, less regular and gaudy, indeed, but more grand, majestic, and we may add, becoming, for purposes like the present, than the dim and decorated cathedral, the workmanship of human hands. Its application to this use, at this time, related forcibly to the mind of the youth the forms and features of that primitive worship, when the trees stood with gentle murmurs above the heads of the worshippers, and a visible Deity dwelt in shadowed valleys, and whispered an auspicious acceptance of their devotions in every breeze.

could not help acknowledging, as, indeed, must who have ever been under the influence of such a scene, that in this, more properly and perfectly than in any other temple, may the spirit of man recognise and hold familiar and free converse with the spirit of his Creator. There, indeed, without much effort of the imagination, might be beheld the present God—the trees, hills and vales, the wild river and the murmuring water, all the work of his hands, attesting his power, keeping their purpose, and obeying, without scruple, the order of these seasons, for the sphere and operation of which he originally designed them. They were mute lessons, and the example which, in the progress of their existence, year after year, they regularly exhibited, might well persuade the more responsible representative of the same power the propriety of like obedience.

A few fallen trees, trimmed of their branches and touched here and there with the adze, ranging at convenient distances under the boughs of those standing with which they had lately stood up in proud majesty, furnished seats for the now rapidly-gathering assembly. A rough stage, composed of logs,

rudely hewn and crossing each other at right angles, covered, when at a height of sufficient elevation, formed the pulpit from which the preacher was to exhort. A chair, brought from some cottage in the neighbourhood, surmounted the stage. This was all that art had done to accommodate nature in this respect to the purposes of man. The body of the wood immediately adjacent, fastened by their respective bridles to the overhanging branches, were the goodly steeds of the company; forming, in themselves, to the unaccustomed and inexperienced eye, a grouping the most curious. Some, more docile than the rest, were permitted to rove at large, cropping the young herbage and tender grass; occasionally, it is true, during the service, overleaping their limits in literal sense; neighing, whickering and kicking with their heels to the manifest confusion of the plot and the discomfiture of the preacher.

The hour had at length arrived. The audience was numerous if not select. All persuasions—even in that remote region sectarianism had done much towards banishing religion—were assembled promiscuously together and without show of discord excepting that here and there a high stickler for church aristocracy, in a better coat than his neighbour, thrust him aside; or, in another and not less offensive form of pride, in the externals of haughtiness and rotten with innate malignity, groaned audibly through his clenched teeth; and with shut eyes and crossed hands, as in prayer, sought to pass a practical rebuke upon the less devout exhibition of those around him. The cant and the clatter, it prevails in the crowded mart, were here in miniature; and Charity would have needed something more than a Kamschatka covering to have shut out from her eyes the enormous hypocrisy of man.

among the clamorous professors of that faith, of which they did not feel much and knew little. If she shut her eyes to the sight, their groans were in her ears; and if she turned away, they took her by the elbow, and called her a backslider herself. Forrester whispered in the ears of Ralph, as his eye encountered the form of Miss Munro, who sat primly amid a flock of venerables—

“Doesn’t she talk like a book? Ah, she’s a smart, sweet girl; it’s a pity there’s no better chance for her than Guy Rivers. But where’s he—the rascal? Do you know I nearly got my fingers on his throat last night. I felt deusedly like it, I assure you.”

“Why, what did he to you?”

“Answered me with such impudence! I took him for the pedler in the dark, and calculated I had got a prize; it wasn’t the pedler, but something worse—for in my eyes he’s no better than a pole-cat.”

But, the preacher had risen in his place, and all was silence and attention. We need scarcely seek to describe him. His appearance was that of a very common man; and the anticipations of Colleton, as he was one of those persons apt to be taken by appearances, suffered something like rebuke. His figure was diminutive and insignificant; his shoulders were round, and his movements excessively awkward; his face was thin and sallow; his eyes dull and inexpressive, and too small, seemingly, for command. A too frequent habit of closing them in prayer, contributed, no doubt, greatly to this appearance. A redeeming expression in the high forehead, conically rising, and the strong character exhibited in his nose, neutralized in some sort the generally unattractive outline. His hair, which was of a deep black, was extremely coarse,

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and closely cropped; it gave to his look that general expression, which associated him at once in the mind of Ralph, whose reading in those matters was fresh, with the Commonwealth History of England—with the Puritans, and those diseased fanatics of the Cromwell dynasty, not omitting that profound hypocrite himself. What then was the surprise of the youth, having such impressions, to hear a discourse, unassuming in its dictates, mild in its requisitions—and of a style and temper the most soothing and persuasive.

The devotions commenced with a hymn, two lines of which, at a time, having been read and repeated by the preacher, furnished a guide to the congregation; the female portion of which generally uniting to sing, in a style the sweetness of which was doubly effective from the utter absence of all ornament in the music. The strains were just such as the old shepherds, out among the hills, tending their charges, might have been heard to pour forth, almost unconsciously, to that God who sometimes condescended to walk along with them. After this was over, the preacher rose, and read, with a voice as clear as unaffected, the twenty-third Psalm of David, the images of which are borrowed chiefly from the life in the wilderness, and were therefore not unsuited to the ears of those to whom it was now addressed. Without proposing any one portion of this performance as a text or subject of commentary, and without seeking, as is quite too frequently the case with small teachers, to explain doubtful passages of little meaning and no importance, he delivered a discourse, in which he simply dilated upon and carried out, for the benefit of those about him, and with a direct reference to the case of all of them, those beautiful portraits of a good shepherd and a guardian God, which the produc-

tion which he read had furnished ready to his hands. He spoke of the dependence of the creature; instanced, as it is daily, by a thousand wants and exigencies, for which, unless by the care and under the countenance of Providence, he could never of himself provide. He narrated the dangers of the forest—imaging by this figure the mazes and mysteries of life—the difficulty, nay, the almost utter impossibility, unless by his sanction, of procuring sustenance, and of counteracting those innumerable incidents by fell and flood, which in a single moment defeat the cares of the hunter and the husbandman—setting at naught his industry, destroying his fields and cattle, blighting his crops, and tearing up with the wing of the hurricane even the cottage which gives shelter to his little ones. He dwelt largely and long upon those numberless and sudden events in the progress of life and human circumstance, over which, as they could neither be foreseen nor combated with by man, he had no control; and appealed for him to the Great Shepherd, who alone could do both. Having shown the necessity of such an appeal and reference, he next proceeded to describe the gracious willingness which had at all times been manifested by the Creator, to extend the required protection. He adverted to the fortunes of all the patriarchs in support of this position; and singling out innumerable instances of this description, confidently assured them, in turn, from these examples, that the same Shepherd was not unwilling to provide for them in like manner. Under his protection, he assured them, “they should not want.” He dilated at length, and with a graceful dexterity, upon the truths—the simple and mere truths of God’s providence, and the history of his people—which David had embodied in the beautiful psalm which he had

read them. It was poetry, indeed—sweet poetry—but it was the poetry of truth and not of fiction. Did not history sustain its every particular? Had not the Shepherd made them to lie down in green pastures—had he not led them beside the still waters—restored he not their souls—did he not lead them, for his name's sake, in the paths of righteousness, and though at length they walked through the valley where Death had cast his never-departing shadow, was he not with them still, keeping them even from the fear of evil? He furnished them with the rod and staff; he prepared the repast for them, even in the presence of their enemies—he anointed their heads with oil, and blessed them with quiet and abundance, until the cup of their prosperity was running over—until they even ceased to doubt that goodness and mercy should follow them all the days of their life; and, with a proper consciousness of the source whence this great good had arisen, they determined, with the spirit not less of wise than of worthy men, to follow his guidance, and thus dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. Such did the old man describe the fortunes of the old patriarchs to have been; and such, having first entered into like obligations, and pursuing them with the same fond fixedness of purpose, did he promise should be the fortunes of all who then listened to his voice. As he proceeded to his peroration, he grew warmed with the broad and boundless subject before him, and his declamation became alike bold and beautiful. All eyes were fixed upon him, and not a whisper from the still murmuring woods which girded them in was perceptible to the senses of that pleased and listening assembly. The services of the morning were closed by a paraphrase, in part, of the psalm from which his discourse had been drawn; and as this

performance, in its present shape, is not to be found, we believe, in any of the books devoted to such purposes, it is but fair to conclude that the old man—not unwilling, in his profession, to employ every engine for the removal of all stubbornness from the hearts of those he addressed—sometimes invoked Poetry to smile upon his devotions, and wing his aspirations for the desired flight. It was sung by the congregation, in like manner with the former—the preacher reading two lines at a time, after having first gone through the perusal, aloud, of the piece entire. With the recognised privilege of the romancer, who is supposed to have a wizard control over men, events, and things alike, we are enabled to preserve the paraphrase here.

SHEPHERD'S HYMN.

Oh, when I rove the desert waste, and 'neath the hot sun pant,
The Lord shall be my shepherd then—he will not let me want—
He'll lead me where the pastures are of soft and shady green,
And where the gentle waters rove, the quiet hills between.

And when the savage shall pursue, and in his grasp I sink,
He will prepare the feast for me, and bring the cooling drink—
And save me harmless from his hands, and strengthen me in toil,
And bless my home and cottage lands, and crown my head with oil.

With such a Shepherd to protect—to guide and guard me still,
And bless my heart with every good, and keep from every ill—
Surely I shall not turn aside, and scorn his kindly care,
But keep the path he points me out, and dwell for ever there.

The service had not yet been concluded—the last parting offices of prayer and benediction had yet to be performed, when a sudden and singular stir took place among certain of the audience, which terminated in their hasty departure from the main body of the assembly. A movement of the kind was so very novel, so perfectly indecorous, and in the face of all former usage, that it could

not fail to attract the attention of everybody. Those, not the first to withdraw, followed in rapid succession, to see after one another; until, under the influence of that wild stimulant, curiosity, the preacher soon found himself utterly unattended, except by the female portion of his auditory. These too, or rather the main body of them, at least, were now only present in a purely physical sense; for, with the true characteristic of the sex, their minds were busily employed in the wilderness of reflection which this movement of the men had necessarily inspired. Ralph Colleton, however, with praiseworthy decorum, had lingered to the last—his companion Forrester, under the influence of a whisper from one over his shoulder, having been among the first to retire. He too, could not, in the end, avoid the general disposition, and at length took his way to the animated and earnest knot, which he saw assembled in the shade of the adjoining thicket, busied in the discussion of some concern of more than common interest. In his departure from the one gathering to the other, he caught a glance from the eye of Lucy Munro, which had in it, to his mind, so much of warning, mingled at the same time with an expression of so much interest, that he half stopped in his progress, and but for the seeming indecision and awkwardness of such a proceeding, would have returned—the more particularly, indeed, when encountering her gaze with a corresponding fixedness, though her cheek grew to crimson with the blush that overspread it, her glance was yet not withdrawn. He felt that her intention was that of advice and caution, and inwardly determined upon a due degree of circumspection. The cause of interruption may as well be reserved for the next chapter.

CHAPTER XII.

"Ye have made a fine hand, fellows—
There's a trim rabble let in. Are all these
Your faithful friends of the suburbs?"

SHAKESPEARE, *Henry VIII.*

RALPH now made his way into the thick of the crowd, curious to ascertain the source of so much disquiet and tumult as now began to manifest itself among them. The words of peace which they had just heard, seemed to have availed them but little, for every brow was blackened, and every tongue was tipped with oaths and execrations. His appearance attracted no attention, if, indeed, it was not entirely unobserved. The topic in hand was of an interest quite too fresh and all-absorbing to permit of a single glance or thought towards any other object of more doubtful importance, and it was only after much delay and difficulty that he was enabled at length to get the least insight into the mystery. All were speakers, counsellors, orators—old and young, big and little, illustrious and obscure,—all but the legitimate and legal counsellor, Pippin, who, to the surprise of the youth, was to be seen, galloping at the uttermost stretch of his horse's legs towards the quiet of his own abode. The lawyer was known to have a particular care of number one, and such a movement excited no remark in any of the rest of the assembly. There was danger at hand, and he knew his value—besides, there might be business for the sessions, and he valued

too highly the advantages, in a jury case, of a clear conscience, not to be solicitous to keep his honour clear of any art or part in criminal matters, saving only such connexion as might come professionally. That the lawyer was not without reason for his precaution, Ralph had soon abundant testimony himself. Arms and the munitions of war, as if by magic, had been rapidly collected. Some of the party, it is true, had made their appearance at the place of prayer originally with rifles and fowling-pieces; but this, in those regions, was a practice of large extent and occasioned no surprise. But the managers of the present movement had seemingly furnished all hands with weapons, offensive and defensive, of one kind or another. Some were caparisoned with pistols, cutlasses, and knives; and, not to speak of pick-axes and clubs, the array was sufficiently formidable. The attitude of all parties was warlike in the extreme, and the speeches of those who, from time to time, condescended to please themselves by haranguing their neighbours, teemed with nothing but strife and wounds, fight and furious circumstance.

The matter, as we have already remarked, was not made out by the youth without considerable difficulty. He obtained, however, some particulars from the various speakers, which, taken in connexion with the broken and incoherent sentences of Forrester, who dashed into speech at intervals with something like the fury of a wounded panther in a cane-brake, contributed at length to his full enlightenment.

"Matter enough,—matter enough; and you will think so too—to be robbed of our findings by a parcel of blasted coons, that haven't soul enough for themselves to keep them from freezing. Why, this is the matter, you must know: only last week,

"We miners of Tracy's diggings struck upon a fine heap of the good stuff, and have been gathering gold pretty freely ever since. All the boys have been doing well at it; better than they ever did before—and even Munro there, and Rivers, who have never been very fond of work, neither of them, have been pretty busy ever since then; for, as I tell you, we were making a sight of money all of us. Well now, somehow or other, our good luck got to the ears of George Dexter and his men, who have been at work for some time past upon old Johnson's diggings about fourteen miles up on the Sokee river. They could never make much out of the place, I know; for what it had good in it was pretty much cleaned out of it when I was there, and I know it can't get better, seeing that gold is not like trees, to grow out every year. Well, as I say, George Dexter, who would just as leave do wrong as right, and a great deal rather, got tired, as well as all his boys, of working for the fun of the thing merely; and so, hearing as I say of our good luck, what did they do but last night come quietly down upon our trace, and when Jones, the old man we kept there as a kind of safeguard, tried to stop 'em, they shot him through the body as if he had been a pig. His son got away when his father was shot, though they did try to shoot him too, and come post-haste to tell us of the transaction. There stands the lad, his clothes all bloody and ragged. He's had a good run of it through the bushes, I reckon."

"And they are now in possession of your lands?"

"Every fellow of 'em, holding on with gun in hand, and swearing to be the death of us if we try for our own. But we'll show them what's what, or I can't sling a hatchet or take aim with a rifle."

This, now, Master Colleton, is the long and short of the matter."

"And what do you now propose to do?" asked our hero of his informant.

"Why, what should we do, do you think, but find out who the best men are, and put them in possession. There's not a two legged creature among us that won't be willing to try that question, any how, and at any time, but more particularly now, when every thing depends upon it."

"And when do you move, Forrester?"

"Now, directly—this very minute. The boys have just sent for some extra powder, and are putting things in readiness for a brush."

The resolution of Ralph was at once adopted. He had nothing, it is true, to do in the matter—no interest at stake, and certainly no sympathy with the lawless men who went forth to fight for a property and possession to which they had not a jot more of right than had those who usurped its use from them. But here was a scene—here was incident, excitement—and with all the enthusiasm of the southern temper, and with that uncalculating warmth which so much distinguishes it, he determined, without much regard to the merits of the question, to go along with the party.

"I'll ride with you, Forrester, and see what's going on."

"And stand up with us, 'squire, and join in the scuffle?" inquired his companion.

"I say not that, Forrester. I have no interest, no concern in this matter, and so long as I am let alone myself, I see no reason for taking part in an affair, the merits of which I am almost entirely ignorant of."

"You will take your arms with you, I suppose."

"You can lend them to those who fight, though you make no use of them yourself."

"Yes—I never go without arms in travelling, but I shall not lend them. A man should no more lend his arms than he should lend his coat. Every man should have his own weapons."

"Yes, but, 'squire, if you go along with us, you may be brought into the scrape. The other party may choose to consider you one of us."

"It is for this reason, not less than others, that I would carry and not lend my arms."

"Well, 'squire, you might lend them to some of us, and I would answer for them. It's true, as you say, that every man should have his own weapons; but some among us, you see, ha'n't got 'em, and its for that we're waiting. But come, it's time to start; the boys are beginning to be in motion—and here comes Munro, and that skunk Rivers—I reckon Munro will have the command, for he's thought to be the most cunning man among us."

The party was now ready for departure, when a new interruption was experienced. The duties of the pastor were yet to begin, and accordingly, sallying forth at the head of his remaining congregation, Parson Witter joined the formidable array of seceders. It is unnecessary that we should state his purpose; it is as little necessary that we should say that it was unavailing. Men of the kind of whom we speak, though perhaps not insensible to some of the bolder virtues, have no sympathy or love for a faith which teaches forbearance under wrong and insult, and meekness under blows. If they did not utterly laugh in his face, therefore, at the nature of his exhortations, it was because, at the very first overture, they had, to a man, turned their backs upon him and were now generally mounted. Following the common lead,

Ralph approached the group where stood ^{his} fair friend of the morning; and acknowledged ~~and~~ ⁱⁿ an under tone, to herself, the correctness of ^{her} opinion in regard to the merits of the sermon. She did not reply to the observation, but seeing his hand upon the bridle, asked hurriedly—

“Do you, sir—does Mr. Colleton go with this party?”

“I do—the circumstances are all so novel, and I am curious to see as much of manners and events foreign to those to which I have been accustomed, as may be practicable.”

“I fear me, sir, that those which you may behold on occasions such as these, and in this country, though they may enlighten you, will do little towards your gratification. You have friends, sir, who might not be willing that you should indulge in unnecessary exposure, for the satisfaction of a curiosity so unpromising.”

Her manner was dignified, and though as she spoke a something of rebuke came mingled with the caution which her language conveyed, yet there was evidently such an interest in his fortunes embodied in what she said, that the listener whom she addressed could not feel hurt at the words themselves, or the accompanying expression.

“I shall be a mere looker-on, Miss Munro, and dare to disregard the caution which you bestow, though duly sensible of the kindness which gives it utterance. Perhaps, too, I may be of service in the way of peace-making. I have neither interest nor wish which could prompt me to any other course.”

“There is every need for caution among young travellers, sir; and though no astrologer, it seems to me your planet is full of unfavourable auguries. If you will be headstong, see that you have

"Your eyes about you. You have need of them both."

This was all in by-play. The group had passed on, and a single nod of the head and a doubtful smile, on her part, concluded the brief dialogue we have just narrated. The youth was puzzled to understand the significant warnings, which, from time to time, she had given him. He felt unconscious of any foe in particular, and though at that time sojourning with a people in whom he could repose but little confidence, he saw no reason to apprehend any danger to himself at least. If her manner and words had reference simply to the general lawlessness of the settlement, the precaution evidently conveyed no compliment to his own capacities for observation. Whatever might have been her motive, the youth felt its kindness; and she rose not a little in his esteem, when he reflected with how much dignity and lady-like loftiness she had given, to a comparative stranger, the counsel which she evidently thought necessary to his well-being. With a free rein he soon overtook his friend Forrester, and with him took his place, and kept, with a due sense of propriety, in the rear of the now rapidly-advancing cavalcade.

As Forrester had conjectured, the command of the party, such as it was, was assigned to the landlord. There might have been something like forty or fifty men in all, the better portion of them mounted and well armed—some few on foot struggling to keep pace with the riders—all in high spirits, and indignant at the invasion of what they considered their own. These, however, were not all hunters of the precious metal, and many of them, indeed, as the reader has by this time readily conjectured, carried on a business of a very mixed complexion. The whole village—blacksmith, gro-

cer, baker, and clothier included, turned out *en masse*, upon the occasion; for, with an indisputable position in the elements of political economy, deriving their gains directly or indirectly from this pursuit, the cause was, literally and in fact, a cause in common.

The scene of operations, in view of which they had now come, had to the eye all the appearance of a moderate encampment. The intruding force had done the business completely. They had made a final and full transfer, from their old to their new quarters, of bag and baggage; and had possessed themselves of all the log-houses in and about the disputed region. Their fires were in full heat, to use the frontier phrase, and the water was hissing in their kettles, and the dry thorns crackling under the pot. Never had usurpers made themselves more perfectly at home; and the rage of the old incumbents was, of course, duly heightened at a prospect of so much ease and felicity enjoyed at their expense. The enemy were about equal in point of number with those whom they had so rudely dispossessed. They had, however, in addition to their disposable force, their entire assemblage of wives, children, slaves, and dependents, cattle and horses, enough, as Forrester bitterly remarked, "to breed a famine in the land." They had evidently settled themselves *for life*, and the ousted party, conscious of the fact, prepared for the *dernier* resort. Every thing on the part of the usurpers indicated a full and perfect state of preparedness for an issue which they never doubted would be made; and all the useless baggage, interspersed freely with rocks and fallen trees, had been well employed in increasing the strength of a position for which, such an object considered, nature had already done much. The defences, as

now stood, precluded all chance of success an attack by mounted men, unless the force employed was overwhelming. The defenders ready at their posts, partly under cover, and arrayed as easily to put themselves so, and armed in very nearly the same manner with sailing party. In this guise of formidable defence, they waited patiently the onset.

There was a brief pause after their arrival at the post, on the part of the invading force, which employed principally in a consultation as to the proper mode of procedure, and in an examination of the ground. Their plan of attack, dependent altogether upon the nature of circumstances as they were yet to be seen, had not at all been decided upon before. The consultation lasted not long, and no man's patience was too severely

Having deputed the command to the land-owners they left the matter pretty much to that person who was their choice unhappy. Munro had a partisan well-taught in Indian warfare; and he said of him that he knew quite as well how to practise all their subtleties as themselves. The object with him, therefore, in accordance with his reputation, was to fix upon some snare, to devise a plot, by which not only to destroy the inequality of chances between the party assailing that defending a post now almost impregnable, but to draw the latter entirely out of their defence. Still it was deemed but courteous, or prudent at least, to see what could be done in the way of negotiation; and their leader, with a white kerchief attached to a young sapling, hewn down for the purpose, by way of apology for his approach, approached the besieged, and in front of him demanded a conference with the usurping chief. The demand was readily and at once an-

swered by the appearance of the already named George Dexter; a man who, with little sagacity and but moderate cunning, had yet acquired a lead and notoriety among his fellows, even in that wild region, simply from the reckless boldness and fierce impetuosity of his character. It is useless to describe such a person. He was a ruffian—in look and manner, ruffianly—huge of frame, strong and agile of muscle, and steeled against all fear, simply from a brute unconsciousness of all danger. There was little of preliminary matter in this conference. Each knew his man, and the business in hand. All was direct, therefore, and to the point. Words were not to be wasted without corresponding fruits, though the colloquy began, on the part of Munro, in terms of the most accredited courtesy.

“Well, George Dexter, a pleasant morning to you in your new accommodations. I see you have learned to make yourself perfectly at home when you visit your neighbours.”

“Why, thank you, Wat—I generally do, I reckon, as you know of old. It’s not now, I’m inclined to think, that you’re to learn the ways of George Dexter. He’s a man, you see, Wat, that never has two ways about him.”

“That’s true, friend George, I must say that for you, were I to have to put it on your tombstone.”

“It’s a long ride to the Atlantic, Wat; and the time is something off yet, I reckon, when my friends will be after measuring me for a six-foot accommodation. But, look you, Wat, why are all your family here?—I did think, when I first saw them on the trail, some with their twisted and some with smooth bores, tomahawks, and scalping-knives, that they took us for Indians. If you hadn’t come forward now, civilly, I should have been for giving

your boys some mutton-chops, not to speak of a cold cut."

"Well, George, you may do that yet; old fellow, for here we have all come to take our Sunday dinner. You are not in the notion that we shall let you take possession here so easily, without even sending us word, and paying us no rent—no compensation?"

"Why, no, Wat—I knew you and your boys too well for that. I did look, you see, to have a bit of a brush, and have made some few preparations to receive you with warmth and open arms," was the response of Dexter, pointing as he spoke to the well-guarded condition of his entrenchments, and to his armed men, who were now thickly clustering about him. Munro saw too plainly, as he had been directed, that this was no idle boast, and that the disposition of his enemy's force, without some stratagem, set at defiance, and rendered liable to certain overthrow, any attack under present circumstances. Still he did not despair, and taught in Indian warfare, such a position was the very one to bring out his energies and abilities. Falling back for a moment, he uttered a few words in the ear of one of his party, who withdrew unobserved from his companions, while Munro returned to the parley.

"Well, George, I see, as you have said, that you have made some preparations to receive us, but they are not the preparations that I like exactly, nor such as I think we altogether deserve."

"That may be, Wat—and I can't help it. If you will invite yourselves to dinner, you must be content with what I put before you."

"It is not a smart speech, Dexter, that will give you free walk on the high road; and something is to be said about this proceeding of yours, which,

you must allow, is clearly in the teeth of all the practices prevailing among the people of the frontier. At the beginning, and before any of us knew the value of this or that spot, you chose your ground, and we chose ours. If you leave yours or we ours, then either of us may take possession—not without. Is not this the custom?"

"I tell you what, Munro, I have not lived so long in the woods to listen to wind-guns, and if such is the kind of argument you bring us, I take it, your dumpy lawyer,—what do you call him?—little Pippin, ought to have been prime head of your party. He will do it all day long—I've heard him myself, at the sessions, from midday till clean dark, and after all he said nothing."

"If you mean to persuade yourself, George, that we shall do no more than *talk* for our lands and improvements, you are likely to suffer something for your mistake."

"Your 'lands and improvements'!—Well, now, I like that—that's very good, and just like you. Now, Wat, not to put you to too much trouble, I'd like to look a little into your title to the lands—as to the improvements, they're at your service whenever you think proper to send for them. There's the old lumber house—there's the squatter's house—there's where the cow keeps, and there's the hog-stye, and half a dozen more, all of which you're quite welcome to. I'm sure none of you want 'em, boys,—do you?"

A hearty laugh, and cries in the negative, followed this somewhat technical retort and reply of the speaker—since, in trespass, according to the received forms of law, the first duty of the plaintiff is to establish his own title.

"Then, George, you are absolutely bent on hav-

ing us show our title? You won't deliver up peaceably, and do justice?"

"Can't think of such a thing—we find the quarters here quite too comfortable, and have come too far to be in a hurry to return. We are tired, too, Wat; and it's not civil in you to make such a request. When you can say 'must' to us, we shall hear you, but not till then; so, my old fellow, if you be not satisfied, why the sooner we come to short sixes the better," was the response of the desperado, for such, in every essential particular, he was. The indifferent composure with which he uttered a response, which was in fact the signal for bloodshed, not less than the savage ferocity of his preparations generally, amply sustained his pretension to this appellative. Munro knew his man too well not to perceive that to this "fashion must they come at last;" and simply assuring Dexter that he would submit his decision to his followers, he retired back upon the anxious and indignant party, who had heard a portion, and now eagerly and angrily listened to the rest, of the detail. Having gone over the matter, he proceeded to his arrangements for the attack with all the coolness, and certainly much of the conduct of a veteran. In many respects he truly deserved the character of one—his courage was unquestionable, and any individual deficiency of this quality is very readily discovered in the southern country. When aroused, he still preserved his coolness, even when coupled with the vindictive ferocity of the savage. His experience in all the modes of warfare, commonly known to the white man and Indian alike, in the woods, was complete—every thing, indeed, eminently fitted and prepared him for the duties which, by common consent, had been devolved upon him. He now called them around him, under a

clump of trees and brushwood which concealed them from sight, and thus addressed them in a style and language graduated to their pursuits and understandings.

"And now, my fine fellows—you see it is just as I told you all along. You will have to fight for it, and with no half spirit. You must just use all your strength and skill in it, and a little cunning beside. We have to deal with a man who would just as leave fight as eat; indeed, he prefers it. As he says himself, there's no two ways about him. He will come to the scratch himself, and make everybody else do so. So, then, you see what's before you. It's no child's play. They count more men than we—not to speak of their intrenchments and shelter. We must dislodge them if we can; and to begin, I have a small contrivance in my head which may do some good. I want two from among you to go upon a nice business. I must have men quick of foot, keen of sight, and cunning as a black snake; and they mustn't be afraid of a knock on the head either. Shall I have my men?"

There was no difficulty in this, and the leader was soon provided. He selected two from among the applicants for the distinction, upon whose capacities, as he himself had described them, he thought he could best rely, and led them away from the party into the recess of the wood, where he gave them their directions, and returned to the main body. He now proceeded to the division, into smaller parts, of his force—placing them under guides rather than leaders, and reserving to himself the instruction and command of the whole. There was still something to be done, and conceiving this to be a good opportunity for employing a test, already determined upon, he approached

Ralph Colleton, who surveyed the whole affair with intense curiosity.

"And now, young 'squire—you see what we're driving at, and as our present business won't permit of neutrality, let us hear on which side you stand. Are you for us or against us?" The question was one rather of command than solicitation, but the manner of the speaker was sufficiently deferential.

"I see not why you should ask the question, sir. I have no concern in your controversy—I know not its merits, and propose simply to content myself with the position of a spectator. I presume there is nothing offensive in such a station."

"There may be, young sir; and you know that when people's blood's up, they don't stand on trifles. They are not apt to discriminate between foes and neutrals; and, to speak the truth, we are apt, in this part of the country, to look upon the two, at such moments, as the same. You will judge, therefore, for yourself, of the risk you run."

"I always do, Mr. Munro," said the youth. "I cannot see that the risk is very considerable at this moment, for I am at a loss to perceive the policy of your making an enemy of me, when you have already a sufficient number to contend with in yonder barricade. Should your men, in their folly, determine to do so, I am not unprepared, and I think not unwilling, to defend myself."

"Ay, ay—I forgot, sir, you were from Carolina, where they make nothing of swallowing Uncle Sam for a lunch. It is very well, sir—you take your risk, and will abide the consequences; though I look not to find you when the fray begins."

"You shall not provoke me, sir, by your sneer; and may assure yourself, if it will satisfy you, that though I will not fight for you, I shall have no

scruple of putting a bullet through the skull of the first ruffian who gives me the least necessity."

The youth spoke indignantly, but the landlord appeared not to regard or listen to the retort. Turning to the troop, which had been decorously attentive, he bade them follow, saying—

"Come on, boys—we shall have to do without the stranger—he does not fight, it seems, for the fun of the thing. If Pippin was here, doubtless, we should have arguments enough from the pair, to keep them in whole bones, at least, if nobody else."

To understand the full force of this sarcasm, it is necessary that the reader should have some knowledge of the modes of thinking on the subject of the duello, and individual readiness for the *ultima ratio*, prevailing in the southern and western country. There is no imputation upon a man so formidable and destructive to his character and pretensions as any backwardness in this respect, and it is by no means unfrequent to hear the lawyer of the interior defending his client, in a prosecution for assault and battery, by alleging the pusillanimity of the person who suffered and submitted to it. A laugh of bitter scorn and contumelious emphasis followed the remark of Munro, as the party went on its way. Though inwardly assured of the propriety of his course, Ralph could not help biting his lip with the mortification he felt from this circumstance, and which he was compelled to suppress; and we hazard nothing in the assertion when we say, that had his sympathies been at all enlisted with the assailing party, the sarcasm of its leader would have hurried him into the very first rank of attack. As it was, such was its influence upon him, that, giving a free rein and close spur to his steed, he advanced to a position

and eminence which, while it afforded him a clear survey of the whole field, exposed his person not a little to the shot of either party, as well from without as from within the beleaguered district. The invading force soon commenced the affair. They came to the attack in the manner of the Indians. The nature of forest life, and its necessities, of itself teaches this mode of warfare. Each man took his tree, his bush, or stump, approaching from cover to cover until within rifle reach, then patiently awaiting until an exposed head, a side or shoulder, leg or arm, gave an opportunity for the exercise of his skill in marksmanship. To the keen sighted and quick, rather than to the strong, is the victory; and it will not be wondered at, if, educated thus in daily adventure, the hunter is enabled to detect the slightest and most transient exhibition, and by a shot, which in most cases is fatal, to avail himself of the indiscretion of his enemy. If, however, this habit of life begets skill in attack and destruction, it has not the less beneficial effect in creating a like skill and ingenuity in the matter of defence. In this way we shall account for the limited amount of injury done in the Indian wars, in proportion to the noise and excitement which they make, and the many terrors they occasion. The fight had now begun in this manner, and both parties being at the outset studiously well sheltered and secured, with little or no injury—the shot doing no more harm to the enemy on either side than barking the branch of the tree or splintering the rock behind which they happened individually to be sheltered. In this fruitless manner the affray had for a little time been carried on, without satisfaction to any concerned, when Munro was beheld advancing, with the apology for a flag which he had used before, towards the beleaguered

artifice known to the lusty wrestlers of this region was put in exercise, and the contest was variously contested. At one time the ascendancy was clearly with the one, at another moment it was transferred to his opponent; victory, like some shy arbiter, seeming unwilling to fix the palm, from an equal regard for both the claimants. Munro still had the advantage—but, a momentary pause of action, and a sudden evolution of his antagonist, now materially altered their position, and Dexter, with the sinuous agility of the snake, winding himself completely around his opponent, now whirled him suddenly over and brought himself upon him. Extricating his arms with admirable skill, he was enabled to regain his knee, which was now closely pressed upon the bosom of the prostrate man, who struggled, but in vain, to free himself from the position. The face of the ruffian, if we may so call the one in contradistinction to the other, was black with fury; and Munro felt that his violation of the flag of truce was not likely to have any good effect upon his destiny. Hitherto, beyond the weapons of nature's furnishing, they had been unarmed; the case was no longer so, for Dexter having a momentary use of his hand, provided himself with a huge dirk-knife, guarded by a string which hung around his neck, and was usually worn in his bosom—a sudden jerk threw it wide, and fixed the blade with a spring. It was a perilous moment for the fallen man, for the glance of the victor, apart from the action, indicated well the vindictive spirit within him; and the landlord averted his eyes, though he did not speak, and upraised his hands as if to ward off the blow. The friends of Munro now hurried to his relief, but the stroke was already descending—when, on a sudden, to the surprise of all, the look of Dexter was turned

from the foe beneath him, and fixed upon the hills in the distance—his blow was arrested—his grasp relaxed—he released his enemy, and rose sullenly to his feet, leaving his antagonist unharmed.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Clubs, bills, and partisans! strike, beat them down;—
Down with the Capulets—down with the Montagues."

* * *
"Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,
Profaners of this neighbour stained steel,—
Will they not hear? what ho, you men, you beasts,
That quench the fire of your pernicious rage,
With purple fountains, issuing from your veins,
On pain of torture, from those bloody hands,
Throw your mistemper'd weapons to the ground."

Romeo and Juliet.

THIS sudden and unlooked for escape of Munro, from a fate held so inevitable as well by himself as all around him, was not more a matter of satisfaction than surprise with that experienced personage. He did not deliberate long upon his release, however, before recovering his feet, and resuming his former belligerent attitude. The circumstance to which he owed the unlooked-for and most unwonted forbearance of his enemy was quickly revealed. Following the now common direction of all eyes, he discerned a body of mounted and well-armed men, winding on their way in the direction of the encampment, in whose well known uniform he recognised a detachment of the "Georgia Guard," a troop kept, as they all

well knew, in the service of the state, for the purpose not merely of breaking up the illegal and unadvised settlements of the squatters upon the frontiers, upon lands now known to be valuable, but also of repressing and punishing their now frequent outlawries. Such a course had become essential to the repose and protection of the more quiet and more honest adventurer; whose possessions they not only entered upon and despoiled, but whose lives, in numerous instances, had been made to pay the penalty of their enterprise. Such a force could alone meet the exigency, in a country where the sheriff dared not often show himself; and, thus accoutred, and with full authority, the guard, either *en masse*, or in small divisions like the present, was employed, at all times, in scouring, though without any great success, the infested districts. The body now approaching was readily distinguishable, though yet at a considerable distance—the road over which it came lying upon a long ridge of bald and elevated rocks. Its number was not large, comprising not more than forty persons; but, as the squatters were most commonly distrustful of one another, not living together or in much harmony, and having but seldom, as in the present instance, a community of interest or unity of purpose, such a force was considered by the proper authorities adequate to all the duties assigned it. There was but little of the pomp or circumstance of military array in their appearance or approach. Though dressed uniformly, the gray and plain stuffs which they wore were more in unison with the habit of the hunter than the warrior; and, as in that country, the rifle is familiar as a household thing, the encounter with an individual of the troop would perhaps call for no remark. The plaintive note of a single bugle, at intervals reverberating

wildly among the hills over which the party wound its way, more than any thing beside, indicated its character; and even this accompaniment is so familiar as an appendage with the southron—so common, particularly to the negroes, who acquire a singular and sweet mastery over it, while driving their wagons through the woods, or poling their boats down the streams, that one might fairly doubt, with all these symbols, whether the advancing array was in fact more military than civil in its character. They rode on briskly in the direction of our contending parties—the sound of the bugle seeming not only to enliven, but to shape their course, since the stout negro who gave it breath rode considerably ahead of the troop.

Among the squatters there was but little time for deliberation, yet never were their leaders more seriously in doubt or more certainly in difficulty than now, as to the course most proper for their adoption in the common danger. They well knew the assigned duties of the guard, and felt the peril in its full. It was necessary for the common safety—or we should say, rather, the common spoil—that something should be done and determined upon immediately. They were now actually in arms, and could no longer, appearing individually and at privileged occupations, claim to be un-obnoxious to the laws; and it need occasion no surprise in the reader, if, among a people of the kind and class we have described, the measures chosen in the present exigency were of a character the most desperate and reckless. Dexter, whose recent triumph gave him something in the way of a title to speak first, thus delivered himself:—

“Well, Munro—you may thank the devil and the Georgia Guard for getting you out of that

scrape. You owe both of them more now than you ever calculated to owe them. Had they not come in sight just at the lucky moment, my knife would have made mighty small work with your windpipe, I tell you—it did lie so tempting beneath it.”

“Yes—I thought myself a gone chick under that spur, George, and so I believe thought all about us; and when you put off the finishing stroke so suddenly, I took it for granted that you had seen the devil, or some other matter equally frightful,” was the reply of Munro, in a spirit and style equally unique and philosophical with that which preceded it.

“Why, it was something, though not the devil, bad enough for us in all conscience, as you know just as well as I. The Georgia Guard won’t give much time for a move.”

“Bad enough, indeed, Dexter—though I certainly ought not to complain of their appearance,” was the reply of Munro, whose recent escape seemed to run more in his mind than any other subject. He proceeded—

“But this isn’t the first time I’ve had a chance so narrow for my neck; and more than once it has been said to me, that the man born for one fate can’t be killed by another; but when you had me down and your knife over me, I began to despair of my charm.”

“You should have double security for it now, Wat, and so keep your prayers till you see the cross timbers, and the twisted trouble. There’s something more like business in hand now, and seeing that we shan’t be able to fight one another, as we intended, all that we can do now is to make friends as fast as possible, and prepare to fight somebody else.”

"You think just as I should in this matter, and that certainly is the wisest policy left us. It's a common cause we have to take care of, for I happen to know that Captain Fullam—and this I take to be his troop—has orders from the governor to see to us all, and clear the lands in no time. The state, it appears, thinks the land quite too good for such as we, and takes this mode of telling us so. Now, as I care very little about the state—it has never done me any good, and I have always been able to take care of myself without it—I feel just in the humour, if all parties are willing, to have a tug in the matter before I draw stakes."

"That's just my notion, Wat; and d—n 'em, if the boys are only true to the hub, we can row this guard up salt river in no time and less. Look you, now—let's put the thing on a good footing, and have no further disturbance. Put all the boys on shares—equal shares—in the diggings, and we'll club strength, and can easily manage these chaps. There's no reason, indeed, why we shouldn't; for if we don't fix them, we are done up, every man of us. We have, as you see and have tried, a pretty strong fence around us, and, if our men stand to it, and I see not why they shouldn't, Fullam can't touch us with his squad of fifty, ay, and a hundred to the back of 'em."

The plan was feasible enough in the eyes of men to whom ulterior consequences were as nothing in comparison with the excitement of the strife; and even the most scrupulous among them were satisfied, in a little time, and with few arguments, that they had nothing to gain and every thing to lose by retiring from the possessions in which they had toiled so long. There was nothing popular in the idea of a state expelling them from a soil of which it made no use itself; and few among the persons

composing the array had ever given themselves much if any trouble, in ascertaining the nice, and with them entirely metaphysical distinction, between the *mine* and *thine* of the matter. The proposition, therefore, startled none, and prudence having long since withdrawn from their counsels, not a dissenting voice was heard to the suggestion of a union between the two parties for the purposes of common defence. The terms, recognising all of both sides, as upon an equal footing in the profits of the soil, were soon arranged and completed; and in the space of a few moments, and before the arrival of the new comers, the hostile forces were arrayed under one banner, and side by side, stood up for the new contest as if there had never been any other than a community of interest and feeling between them. A few words of encouragement and cheer, given to their several commands by the two joint leaders, Munro and Dexter, were scarcely necessary, for what risk had their adherents to run—what to fear—what to lose? The courage of the desperado invariably increases in proportion to his irresponsibility. In fortune, as utterly destitute and desperate as in character, they had, in most respects, already forfeited the shelter, as in numberless instances they had not merely gone beyond the sanction, but had violated and defied the express interdict of the laws: and now, looking, as such men are apt most usually to do, only to the immediate issue, and to nothing beyond it, the banditti—for such they now were—with due deliberation and decision, and such a calm of disposition as might well comport with a life of continued excitement, proceeded again, most desperately, to set them at defiance.

The military came on in handsome style. They were all fine-looking men; natives generally of a

e, the great body of whose population are well-nerved, and distinguished by features of clear, open intelligence. They were well-mounted, and each carried a short rifle, a sword, and pair of pistols. They rode in single file, following their commander; a gentleman—in person, of great manliness of frame, possessed of much grace and ease of action. They formed at command, readily, in front of the post, which may be now said to have assumed the guise of a regular military station;

Fullam, the captain, advancing with much mingled surprise in his countenance and manner, addressed the squatters generally, without reference to the two leaders, who, both, at that moment, stood forth as representatives of their several sections.

How is this, my good fellows? what is meant by your present military attitude. Why are you, on the Sabbath, mustering in this guise—surrounded by barricades, arms in your hands, and armed sentinels on duty. What does all this mean?"

"We carry arms," replied Dexter, without pause, "because it suits us to do so; we fix barricades to keep out intruders; our sentinels have a like object; and if by attitude you mean our standing in and standing there—why, I don't see in what thing concerns anybody but ourselves!"

"Indeed!" said the Georgian; "you bear it wrongly, sir. But it is not to you I speak. Am I to understand you, good people, as assembled here for the purpose of resisting the laws of the land?"

"We don't know, captain, what you mean exactly by the laws of the land," was the reply of the negro; "but, I must say, we are here, as you see now, to defend our property, which the laws

have no right to take from us—none that I can see.”

“So—and is that your way of thinking, sir ; and pray who are you that answer so freely for your neighbours.”

“One, sir, whom my neighbours, it seems, have appointed to answer for them.”

“I am then to understand, sir, that you have expressed their determination on this subject, and that your purpose is resistance to any process of the state compelling you to leave these possessions ?”

“You have stated their resolution precisely,” was the reply. “They had notice that unauthorized persons, hearing of our prosperity, were making preparations to take them from us by force ; and we prepared for resistance. When we know the proper authorities, we shall answer fairly—but not till then.”

“Truly, a very manful determination ; and, as you have so expressed yourself, permit me to exhibit my authority, which I doubt not you will readily recognise. This instrument requires you, at once, to remove from these lands,—entirely to forego their use and possession, and within forty-eight hours to yield them up to the authority which now claims them at your hands.” Here the officer proceeded to read all those portions of his commission to which he had referred, with a considerable show of patience.

“All that’s very well in your hands, and from your mouth, good sir ; but how know we that the document you bear is not forged and false—and that you, with your people there, have not got up this fetch to trick us out of those possessions which you have not the heart to fight for. We’re up to trap, you see.” With this insolent speech, Dexter continued to show his natural impatience for parley,

and that brutal thirst which invariably prompted him to provoke and seek for extremities. The eye of the Georgian flashed out indignant fires, and his fingers instinctively grasped the pistol at his holster, while the strongly aroused expression of his features indicated the rising wrath within. With a strong and successful effort, however, though inwardly chafed at the necessity of his forbearance, he contrived, for a while longer, to suppress any more decided evidence of the rising emotion, while he replied as follows:—

“Your language, sirrah, whatever you may be, is ruffianly and insolent—yet, as I represent the country rather than myself in this business, and as I would perform my duties mildly and without harshness, I pass it by. I am not bound to satisfy you, or any of your company, of the truth of the commission under which I act. It is quite enough if I myself am satisfied. Still, however, for the same reason which keeps me from punishing your insolence, and to keep you from any treasonable opposition to the laws, you too shall be satisfied. Look here, for yourselves, good people—you all know the great seal of the state!”

He now held up on high the document from which he had read, and which contained his authority; the broad seal of the state dangling from the parchment, distinctly in the sight of the whole gang. Dexter approached somewhat nearer, as if to obtain a more perfect view; and, while the Georgian, without suspicion, seeing his advance, and supposing that to be its object, held it more towards him, the ruffian, with an active and sudden bound, tore it from his hands, and leaping, followed by all his group, over his defences, was in a moment close under cover, and out of all danger. Rising from his concealment, however, in the presence of the

officer, he tore the instrument into atoms, and flung them towards their proprietor, exclaiming

"Now, captain, what's the worth of your authority? Be off now in a hurry, or I shall find you in short order."

We may not describe the furious anger of the Georgian. Irritated beyond the control of caution, he precipitately, and without that degree of deliberation which must have taught the madness and inefficacy of any assault, presented force upon an enemy so admirably defended and protected, he gave the command to fire; and after the ineffectual discharge had no other result than to call forth a shower of musket-balls from the besieged, he proceeded to charge the barrier, himself fearlessly leading the way. His first effort to break through and overcome the barrier was sufficient to teach him the folly of his design; and the discharge from the defence, killing down two of his men, warned him, with sufficient emphasis, of the necessity of duly retrieving his error. He saw the odds, and retreated with honour and in good conduct, until he sheltered the troop under a long hill, within rifle-shot of the enemy, from whence, suddenly filing a detachment obliquely to the left, he made his arrangements for the passage of a narrow gorge, having some of the character of a road, and though extremely broken and uneven, having been frequently so. It wound its way to the summit of the hill, which stood parallel with the defence, fully commanded them; and the descent of the gorge, on the opposite side, afforded him as good an opportunity, in a charge, of riding them down to the summit for picking them off singly with his rifle. He found the necessity of great circumstances, however, in the brief sample of controversy;

given him; and with a movement in front, therefore, of a number of his force, sufficient, by employing the attention of the squatters in that quarter, to cover and disguise his present endeavour, he marshalled fifteen of his force apart from the rest, leading them himself, as the most difficult enterprise, boldly up the narrow pass. The skirmishing was still suffered, therefore, to continue on the ground where it had begun, whenever a momentary exposure of the person of besieged or besieger afforded any chance for a successful shot. Nor was this game very hazardous to either party. The beleaguered force, as we have seen, were well-protected—the assailants, having generally dismounted, their horses being placed out of reach of danger, had, in the manner of their opponents, taken the cover of the rising ground, or the fallen tree, and in this way, awaiting the progress of events, were shielded from unnecessary exposure. It was only when a position became awkward or irksome that the shoulder or the leg of the unquiet man thrust itself too pertinaciously above its shelter, and got barked or battered by a bullet; and as all parties knew too well the skill of their adversaries, it was not often that a shoulder or leg became so indiscreetly prominent. As it was, however, the squatters, from a choice of ground, and a perfect knowledge of it, together with the additional guards and defences which they had been enabled to place upon it, had evidently the advantage. Still, no event calculated to impress either party with any decisive notion of the result, had yet taken place; and beyond the injury done to the assailants in their first ill-advised assault, they had suffered no serious harm. They were confident in themselves and their leader—despised the squatters heartily; and, indeed, did not suffer themselves for a moment to

think of the possibility of their defeat. Thus the play proceeded in front of the defences, while Fullam silently and industriously plied his way up the narrow gorge, covered entirely from sight of the enemy by the elevated ridges of rock, which rising up boldly on either side of the pass, had indeed been the cause of its formation. But his enemy was on the alert, and the cunning of Munro, whom his companions, with an Indian taste and emphasis, had happily entitled the "Black Snake"—had already prepared for the reception of the gallant Georgian. With a quick eye he had observed the diminished numbers of the force in front, and readily concluded, from the sluggishness of the affair in that quarter, that a finesse was in course of preparation. Conscious, too, from a knowledge of the post, that there was but a single mode of enfilading his defences, he had made his provisions for the guardianship of the all-important point. Nothing was more easy than the defence of this pass, the ascent being considerable, rising into a narrow peak, and as suddenly and in like manner descending on the point opposite that on which Fullam was toiling up his way. In addition to this, the gulley was winding and brokenly circuitous—now making a broad sweep of the circle—then terminating in a zigzag and cross direction, which, until the road was actually gained, seemed to have no outlet; and at no time was the advancing force enabled to survey the pass for any distance ahead. Every thing in the approach of the Georgian was conducted with the profoundest silence—not the slightest whisper indicated to the assailants the presence or prospect of any interruption; and from the field of strife below, nothing but an occasional shot or shout gave token of the business in which at that moment all parties were engaged. This

quiet was not destined to continue long. The forlorn hope had now reached midway of the summit—but not, as their leader had fondly anticipated, without observation from the foe—when the sound of a human voice directly above him warned him of the error; and looking up, he beheld, perched upon a fragment of the cliff, which hung directly over the gorge, the figure of a single man. For the first time led to anticipate resistance in this quarter, he bade his men prepare for the event as well as they might; and calling out imperatively to the individual, who still maintained his place on the projection of the rock as if in defiance, he bade him throw down his arms and submit!

“Throw down my arms! and for what?” was the reply. “I’d like to know by what right you require us to throw down our arms. It may do in England, or any other barbarous country where the people don’t know their rights yet, to make them throw down their arms; but I reckon there’s no law for it in these parts, that you can show us, captain.”

“Pick that insolent fellow off, one of you,” was the order, and in an instant a dozen rifles were lifted, but the man was gone. A hat appearing above the cliff, was bored with several bullets; and the speaker, who laughed heartily at the success of his trick, now resumed his position on the cliff, with the luckless hat perched upon the staff on which it had given them the provocation to fire. He laughed and shouted heartily at the contrivance, and hurled the victim of their wasted powder down among them. Much chagrined, and burning with indignation, Fullam briefly cried out to his men to advance quickly. The person who had hitherto addressed him was our old acquaintance

Forrester, to whom, in the division of the duties this post had been assigned. He now spoke again.

"You'd better not, captain, now, I advise you. It will be dangerous if you come farther. Don't trouble us now, and be off, as soon as you can, out of harms way. Your bones will be all the better for it; and I declare I don't like to hurt such a fine-looking chap, if I can possibly avoid it. Now take a friend's advice;—'twill be all the better for you, I assure you."

The speaker evidently meant well, so far as it was possible for one to mean well who was commissioned to do, and was, in fact, doing ill. The Georgian, however, only the more indignant at the impertinence of the address, took the following notice of it, uttered in the same breath with an imperative command to his own men to hasten their advance.

"Disperse yourselves, scoundrels, and throw down your arms. On the instant disperse. Lift a hand, or pull a trigger upon us, and every man shall dangle upon the branches of the first tree."

As he spoke, leading the way, he drove his rowels repeatedly and with earnest force into the sides of his animal; and, followed by his troop, bounded fearlessly up the bank.

CHAPTER XIV.

Blood hath been shed 'ere now, i' the olden time,
 Ere human statute purged the gentle weal ;
 Ay, and since, too, murders have been performed
 Too terrible for the ear." *Macbeth.*

It is now high time to return to Ralph Colleton, who has quite too long escaped our consideration. Our reader will doubtless remember, with little culty, where and under what circumstances left him. Provoked by the sneer and sarcasm of the man whom at the same moment he most cordially despised, we have seen him taking a part in the controversy, in which his person, though not actually within the immediate sphere of action, was nevertheless not a little exposed to one of its risks. This position, with fearless independence, he continued to maintain, unshrinkingly without interruption, throughout the whole good and amid all the circumstances of the controversy. There was something of a boyish determination in this way to assert his courage, which his own sense inwardly rebuked ; yet such is the force of those peculiarities in southern habits and manners, to which we have already referred, on all matters which relate to personal prowess and a manly defiance of danger, that, even while entering the most profound contempt for those in whose eye the exhibition was made, he was not sufficiently independent of popular opinion to brave the current when he himself was its subject. He may have had an additional motive for this proceeding, which most probably enforced its necessity.

sity. He well knew that fearless courage, among this people, was that quality which most certainly won and secured their respect; and the policy was not unwise, perhaps, which represented this as a good opportunity for a display, which might have the effect of protecting him from wanton insult or aggression hereafter. To a certain extent he was at their mercy, and conscious, from what he had seen, of the unscrupulous character of their minds, every exhibition of the kind had some weight in his favour.

It was with a lively and excited spirit that he surveyed, from the moderate eminence on which he stood, the events going on around him. Though not sufficiently near the parties (and scrupulous not to expose himself to the chance of being for a moment supposed to be connected with either of them) to ascertain their various arrangements, from what he had met his observation, he had been enabled to form a very correct inference as to the general progress of affairs. He had beheld the proceedings of each array while under cover, and contending with one another, to much the same advantage as the spectator who surveys the game in which two persons are at play. He could have pointed out the mistakes of both in the encounter he had witnessed, and felt assured that he could have ably and easily amended them. His frame quivered with the "rapture of the strife," as Attila is said to have called the excitation of battle; and his blood, with a genuine southern fervour, rushed to and from his heart with a bounding impulse, as some new achievement of either side added a fresh interest to, and in some measure altered the face of, the affair. But when he beheld the new array, so unexpectedly, yet auspiciously for Munro, make its appearance upon the field, the excitement of his spirit

underwent proportionate increase ; and with deep anxiety, and a sympathy now legitimate with the assailants, he surveyed the progress of an affray for which his judgment prepared him to anticipate a most unhappy termination. As the strife proceeded, he forgot half of his precaution, and unconsciously continued, at every moment, 'to approach more nearly to the scene of strife. His heart was now all impulse, his spirit all enthusiasm ; and with an unquiet eye and restless frame, he beheld the silent passage of the little detachment under the gallant Georgian, up into the narrow gorge. At some distance from the hill, and on an eminence, his position enabled him to perceive, when the party had made good their advance nearly to the summit, the impending danger. He saw the threatening cliff hanging as it were in mid air above them ; and all his sympathies, warmly excited and roused at length by the fearfulness of the peril into a degree of active partisanship which, at the beginning, a proper prudence had well-counselled and determined him to avoid, he put spurs to his steed, and rushing forward to the foot of the hill, shouted out to the advancing party the nature of the danger which awaited them. He shouted strenuously, but in vain—and with a feeling almost amounting to agony, he beheld the little troop resolutely advance beneath the ponderous rock, which, held in its place by the slightest purchase, needed but the most moderate effort to upheave and unfix it for ever.

It was fortunate for the youth that the situation in which he was now placed was concealed entirely from the view of those in the encampment. It had been no object with him to place himself in safety, for the consideration of his own chance of exposure had never been looked to in his mind ;

when, under the noble impulse of humanity, he had rushed forward, if possible to recall the little party, who either did not or were unwilling to hear his voice of warning and prevention. Had he been beheld, there would have been few of the squatters unable, and still fewer unwilling, to pick him off with their rifles; and, as the event will show, the good providence alone which had hitherto kept with him, rather than the forbearance of his quondam acquaintance, continued to preserve his life.

Apprized of the ascent of the pass, and not disposed to permit of the escape of those whom the defenders of it above might spare, unobserved by his assailants in front, Dexter, with a small detachment, sallying through a loop-hole of his fortress, took an oblique course towards the foot of the gorge, by which to arrest the flight of the fugitives. This course brought him directly upon and in contact with Ralph, who stood immediately at its entrance, with uplifted eye, and busily engaged in shouting, at intervals, to the yet advancing assailants. The squatters approached cautiously and unperceived; for so deeply was the youth interested in the fate of those for whom his voice and hands were alike uplifted, that he was conscious of nothing else at that moment of despair and doubt. The very silence which at that time hung over all things, seemed of itself to cloud and obstruct, while they lulled the senses into a corresponding slumber. It was well for the youth, and unlucky for the assassin, that, as Dexter, with his uplifted hatchet—for firearms in that place and at that period he dared not use for fear of attracting the attention of his foes—struck at his head, his advanced foot became entangled in the root of a tree which ran above the surface, and the impetus of

his action occurring at the very instant in which he encountered the obstruction, the stroke fell short of his victim, and grazed the side of his horse; while the ruffian himself, stumbling forward and at length, fell headlong upon the ground. The youth was awakened to consciousness. His mind was one of that cast with which to know, to think, and to act, are simultaneous. Of ready decision, he was never at a loss, and seldom surprised into even momentary incertitude. With the first intimation of the attack upon himself, his pistol had been drawn, and while the prostrate ruffian was endeavouring to rise, and before he had well regained his feet, the unerring ball was driven through his head, and without word or effort he fell back among his fellows, the blood gushing from his mouth and nostrils in unrestrained torrents. The whole transaction was the work of a single instant; and before the squatters who came with their slain leader could sufficiently recover from the panic produced by the event to revenge his death, the youth was beyond their reach; and the assailing party of the guard, in front of the post, apprized of the sally by the discharge of the pistol, made fearful work among them by a general fire, while obliquing to the entrance of the pass just in time to behold the catastrophe, now somewhat precipitated by the event which had occurred below. Ralph, greatly excited, regained his original stand of survey, and with feelings of unrepressed horror beheld the event. The Georgian had now almost reached the top of the hill—another turn of the road gave him a glimpse of the table upon which rested the hanging and disjointed cliff of which we have spoken, when a voice was heard—a single voice—in inquiry:—

“All ready?”

The reply was immediate—

“Ay, ay, now prize away, boys, and let go.”

The advancing troop looked up, and were permitted a momentary glance of the terrible fate which awaited them before it fell. That moment was enough for horror. A general cry burst from the lips of those in front, the only notice which those in the rear ever received of the terror before it was upon them. An effort, half paralyzed by the awful emotion which came over them, was made to avert the down-coming ruin; but with only partial success for in an instant after the uttered response which called their attention, the ponderous mass, which hung for a moment like a cloud above them, was heaved from its bed of ages, and now freed from its stays, with a sudden, hurricane-like and whirling impetus, making the solid rock tremble over which it rushed, came thundering down, swinging over half of the narrow trace, bounding from one side to the other along the gorge, and with the headlong force of a cataract sweeping every thing from before its path until it reached the dead level of the plain below. The instinctive shriek from those who beheld the mass (when, for an instant impended above them it seemed to hesitate in its progress down) was more full of human terror and trial than any utterance which followed the event. With the perception of a groan, wrung forth here and there from the half-crushed victim, in nature's agonies, the deep silence which ensued was painful and appalling; and even when the dust had dissipated and the eye was enabled to take in the entire amount of the evil deed, the prospect failed in impressing the senses of the survivors with so distinct a sentiment of horror, as when the doubt of death, suspended in air, were yet only threatening and impending. Though prepared for the evil

In one sense of the word, the great body of the squatters were not prepared for the unusual emotions which succeeded it in their bosoms. The arms dropped from the hands of many of them—a speechless horror was the prevailing feature of all, and all fight was over, while the scene of bloody execution was now one of indiscriminate examination and remark with friend and foe. Ralph was the first to rush up the fatal pass, and to survey the horrible prospect. One half of the brave tile corps had been swept to instant death by the un pitying rock, without having afforded the slightest obstacle to its fearful progress. In one place lay a disembowelled steed panting its last; tangled in a confused and unintelligible mass lay beside him another, the limbs of his rider in many places undistinguishable from his own. One poor wretch, whom he assisted to extricate from beneath the body of his dying and struggling horse, cried to him for water, and died in the prayer. Fortunately for the few who survived the catastrophe, among whom was their gallant but unfortunate young leader, they had, at the first glimpse of the danger, urged on their horses with redoubled effort and animation, and by a close approach to the surface of the rock, and taking an oblique direction wide of its probable course, had, at the time of its precipitation, reached a line almost parallel with the place upon which it stood, and in this way achieved their escape without serious injury. Their number was few, however: and not one half of the fifteen who commenced the ascent ever reached or survived its attainment. Ralph gained the summit just in time to prevent the completion of the foul tragedy by its most appropriate climax. As if enough had not yet been done in the way of crime, the malignant and

merciless Rivers, of whom we have seen little in this affair, but to whose black and devilish spirit the mean of destruction had been hit upon, which had so well succeeded, now stood over the body of the groaning and struggling Georgian, with uplifted hand, about to complete the deed already begun. There was not a moment for delay, and the youth sprang forward in time to seize and to wrest the weapon from his grasp. With a feeling of horror and undisguised indignation, he exclaimed, as the outlaw turned furiously upon him, "Wretch—what would you? Have you not done enough? would you strike the unresisting man?"

Rivers sprang to his feet, and with undisguised effort, now turned his rage upon the intruder. His words, choked by passion, could scarce find utterance—but he spoke with furious effort at length, as he directed a wild blow with a battle axe at his new opponent,—

"You come for your death, and you shall have it!"

"Not yet," replied Ralph, adroitly avoiding the stroke and closing with the ruffian—"you will find that I am not unequal to the struggle, though it be with such a monstrous enormity as yourself."

What might have been the event of this combat may not be said. The parties were separated in a moment by the interposition of Forrester, but not till our hero, tearing off in the scuffle the handkerchief which, as we have seen, had hitherto encircled the cheeks of his opponent, had discovered the friendly outlaw who collected toll for the Pony Club, and upon whose face the hoof of his horse, in part, was most visibly engraven—who had so boldly avowed his design upon his life and

rise, and whom he had so fortunately and successfully foiled on his first approach to the village. The fight, as the reader may readily imagine, was over after this catastrophe; the survivors of the guard, those who were unhurt, had fled—and the parties with little stir were all now assembled around the scene of it. There was little said upon the occasion. The wounded were taken such care of as the nature of the circumstances would permit; and wagons having been provided, were all removed to the village. Begun with too much impulse, and conducted with too little consideration or reflection, the struggle between the military and the outlaws had now terminated in a manner that left perhaps but little quiet or satisfaction in the minds of either party. The latter, though generally an unlicensed tribe—an Ishmaelish race—whose hands were against all men, and the hands of all men, in return, being against them—were not so sure that they had not been guilty of a crime, not merely against the laws of man and human society, but against the self-evident decrees and dictates of God; and with this doubt, at least, if not its conviction, upon their minds and in their thoughts, their victory, such as it was, afforded a source of very qualified rejoicing.

CHAPTER XV.

"——'Tis he ! I know him now ;
I know him by his pallid brow ;
I know him by the evil eye
That aids his envious treachery."

Byron's Giaour.

COLLETON was by no means slow in the recognition of the ruffian, and only wondered at his own dulness of vision in not having made the discovery before. Nor did Rivers, with all his habitual villany, seem so well satisfied with his detection. Perceiving himself fully known, a momentary feeling of disquietude came over him ; and though he did not fear, he began to entertain in his mind that kind of agitation and doubt which made him, for the time, "despair his charm." He was not the cool villain like Munro,—never to be taken by surprise, or at a disadvantage ; and his eye was now withdrawn, though but for a moment, beneath the stern and searching glance which read him through. That tacit animal confession and acknowledgment was alone sufficient to madden a temper such as that of Rivers. Easily aroused, his ferocity was fearless and atrocious, but not measured or methodical. His mind was not marked,—we had almost said tempered—by that wholesome and wholesale indifference of mood which, in all matters of prime villany, is probably the most desirable constituent. He was, as we have seen, a creature of strong passions, morbid ambition, quick and even habitual excitement ; though at times, endea-

vouring to put on that air of sarcastic superiority to all emotion which marked the character of the ascetic philosopher—a character to which he had not the slightest claim or feature of resemblance, and the very affectation of which, whenever he became aroused or irritated, was soon and completely lost sight of and forgotten. Without referring—as Munro would have done, and indeed as he subsequently did—to the precise events which had already just taken place and were still in progress about him, and which made all parties equally obnoxious with himself to human punishment, and for an offence far more criminal in its dye to that which the youth laid to his charge—he could not avoid the momentary apprehension, which, succeeding with the quickness of thought the intelligent and conscious glance of Colleton, immediately came over him. His eye, seldom distinguished by such a habit, quailed before it; and the deep malignity and festering hatred of his soul towards the youth, which it so unaccountably entertained before, underwent, by this mortification of his pride, a due degree of exaggeration.

Ralph, though wise beyond his years, and one who, in a thought borrowed in part from Ovid, we may say, could rather compute them by events than ordinary time, wanted yet considerably in that wholesome, though rather dowdyish virtue, which men call prudence. He acted on the present occasion precisely as he might have done in the College Campus, with all the benefits of a fair field and a plentiful crowd of backers. Without duly reflecting whether an accusation of the kind he preferred, at such a time, to such men, and against one of their own accomplices, would avail much, if any thing, towards the punishment of the criminal—not to speak of his own risk, necessarily in

train, as an almost certain consequence from such an implied determination not to be *particeps criminis* with any of them, he at once spoke forth the wrong, with stentorian lungs and suitable action, and in language accommodated aptly to the bold spirit which called it into utterance. He approached, and boldly denounced Rivers as a murderous villain; and urgently called upon those around him to aid in his arrest. But he was unheard—he had no auditors; nor did this fact result from any unwillingness on their part to hear and listen to the charge against one so detested as the accused. They could see and hear but of one subject—they could comprehend no other. The events of such fresh and recent occurrence were in all minds and before all eyes; and few, if any but Forrester, either heard to understand, or listened for a moment to the recital. Nor did the latter and now unhappy personage appear to give it much more consideration than any of the rest. Hurried on by the force of associating circumstances, and by promptings not of himself or his, he had been an active getter-up, and performer in the terrible drama, the enactment of which we have already witnessed; and the catastrophe of which he could now only, and in vain, deplore. Leaning with a vacant stare and lack-lustre vision against the neighbouring rock, he seemed indifferent to, and perhaps ignorant of, the new occurrences taking place around him. He had interfered when the youth and Rivers were in contact, but that was so soon after the event narrated that time for reflection had not then been allowed. The dreadful process of thinking himself into an examination of his own deeds was going on in his bosom; and remorse, with its severe but salutary stings, was doing, without limitation or restraint, her rigorous

duties. Though either actually congregated or congregating around him, and within free and easy hearing of his voice, now stretched to its utmost, the party were quite too busily employed in the discussion of the events—too much immersed in the sudden stupor which followed, in nearly all minds, their termination—to know or care much what were the hard words, and what the difficulties, between the youth and the outlaw. They had all of them (their immediate leaders excepted) been hurried on, as is perfectly natural and not unfrequently the case, by the rapid succession of incidents (which in their progress of excitement gave them no time for reflection), from one act to another; without perceiving, in a single pause, the several gradations by which they insensibly passed on from crime to crime;—and it was only now, and in a survey of the several foot-prints in their progress, that they were enabled to perceive the vast and perilous leaps which they had taken. As in the ascent, step by step, of the elevation, we can judge imperfectly of its height, until from the very summit we look down upon our place of starting, so with the wretched outcasts of society of whom we speak. Flushed with varying excitements, they had deputed the task of reflection to another and a calmer time; and with the reins of sober reason relaxed, whirled on by their passions, they lost all control over their own impetuous progress, until brought up and checked, as we have seen, by a catastrophe the most ruinous—which, by producing an utter revulsion of the spirits' temper, again, if it does not for ever overthrow her, restores reason to her empire, though now coupled in its sway with the attendant terrors of deep remorse, and many and maddening regrets. From little to large events, we experience or behold this every day.

It is a history, and all read it. It belongs to human nature and to society ; and until some process shall be discovered by which men shall be compelled to think by rule and under regulation, as in a penitentiary their bodies are required to work, we despair of having much improvement in the general condition of human affairs. The ignorant and uneducated man is quite too willing to depute and defer to others the task of thinking for him and furnishing his opinions. The great mass are gregarious, and whether a lion or a log is chosen for their guidance, it is still the same—they will follow the leader, if regularly recognised as such, even though he be an ass. As if conscious of their own incapacities, whether these arise from deficiencies of education or denials of birth, they forego the only habit—that of self-examination—which can supply the deficiency ; and with a blind determination, are willing, on any terms, to divest themselves of the difficulties and responsibilities of their own government. They crown others with all command, and binding their hands with cords, place themselves at the disposal of those, who, in many cases, not satisfied with thus much, must have them hoodwinked also. To this they also consent, taking care, in their great desire to be slaves, to be foremost themselves in tying on the bandage which keeps them in darkness and in chains for ever. Thus will they be content to live, however wronged, if not absolutely bruised and beaten ; happy to escape from the cares of an independent mastery of their own conduct, if, in this way, they can also escape from the noble responsibilities of independence.

The unhappy men, thus led on, as we have seen, from the commission of misdemeanor to that of crime, in reality, never for a moment thought upon

the matter. The landlord, Dexter, and Rivers, had, time out of mind, been their oracles; and without referring to the distinct condition of those persons, they reasoned in a manner not uncommon with the ignorant. Like children at play, they did not perceive the narrow boundaries which separate indulgence from licentiousness; and in the hurried excitement of the mood, inspired by the one habit, they had passed at once, unthinkingly and unconsciously, into the excesses of the other. They now beheld the event in its true colours, and there were but few among the squatters not sadly doubtful upon the course taken, and suffering corresponding dismay from its probable consequences. To a few, such as Munro and Rivers, the aspect of the thing was unchanged—they had beheld its true features from the outset, and knew the course, and defied the consequences. They had already made up their minds upon it—had regarded the matter in all its phases, and suffered no surprise accordingly. Not so with the rest—with Forrester in particular, whose mental distress, though borne with manliness, was yet most distressing. He stood apart, saying nothing, yet lamenting inwardly, with the self-upbraidings of an agonized spirit, the progress of that wild game which had been played; and the easy facility with which he had been won, by the cunning of others, against his own promptings, into the perpetration of a crime so foul. He either for a time heard not or understood not the charges made by Ralph against his late coadjutor, until brought to his consciousness by the increased stir among the confederates, who now rapidly crowded about the spot, in time to hear the denial of the latter to the accusation, in language and a manner alike fierce and unqualified.

“Hear me!” was the exclamation of the youth

—his voice rising in due effect, and illustrating well the words he uttered, and the purpose of his speech :—"I charge this born and branded villain with an attempt upon my life. He sought to rob and murder me at the Catcheta Pass but a few days ago. Thrown between my horse's feet in the struggle, he received the brand of his hoof, which he now wears upon his cheek. There he stands, with the well-deserved mark upon him, and which, but for the appearance of his accomplices, I should have made of a yet deeper character. Let him deny it if he can or dare."

The face of Rivers grew alternately pale and purple with passion, and he struggled in vain, for several minutes, to speak. The words came from him hoarsely and gratingly. Fortunately for him, Munro, whose cool villany nothing might well discompose, perceiving the necessity of speech for him who had none, interfered with the following inquiry, uttered in something like a tone of surprise.

"And what say you to this accusation, Guy Rivers? Can you not find an answer?"

"It is false; false as hell! and you know it, Munro, as well as myself. I never saw the boy until at your house."

"That I know, and why you should take so long to say it I know not. It appears to me, young gentleman," said Munro, with a most cool and delightful effrontery, "that I can set all these matters right. I can show you to be under a mistake; for I happen to know, that at the very time of which you speak, we were both of us up in the Chestatee Fork looking for a runaway slave—you know the fellow, boys,—Black Tom,—who has been *out* for six months and more, and of whom I only got information a few weeks ago. Well, as everybody knows, the Chestatee Fork is at least twenty miles

from the Catcheta Pass, and if we were in one place, we could not, I am disposed to think, very well be in another."

"An alibi, clearly established," was the remark of Counsellor Pippin, who now, peering over the shoulders of the youth, exhibited his face for the first time during the controversies of the day. Pippin was universally known to be possessed of an admirable scent for finding out a danger when it is well over, and when the spoils, and not the toils, of the field are to be reaped. His appearance at this moment, had the effect of arousing, in some sort, the depressed spirits of those around him, by recalling to memory and into exercise the jests upon his infirmities, which long use had made legitimate and habitual. Calculating the probable effect of such a joke, Munro, without seeming to observe the interruption, looking significantly round among the assembly, went on to say:—

"If you have been thus assaulted, young man, and I am not disposed to say it is not as you assert, it cannot have been by any of our village, unless it be that Counsellor Pippin and his fellow Hob were the persons; they were down, now I recollect, at the Catcheta Pass, somewhere about the time; and I've long suspected Pippin to be more dangerous and deadly by far than people think him."

"I deny it all—I deny it. It's not true, young man. It's not true, my friends—don't believe a word of it. Now, Munro, how can you speak so? Hob—Hob—Hob—I say—where the devil are you? Hob—say, you rascal, was I within five miles of the Catcheta Pass to-day?" The negro—a black of the sootiest complexion—now advanced—

"No, mosser."

"Was I yesterday?"

The negro put his finger to his forehead, and the

lawyer began to fret at this indication of thought, and, as it promised to continue, exclaimed—

“Speak, you rascal, speak out—you know well enough, without reflecting.” The slave cautiously responded—

“If mosser want to be dere—mosser dere—no ’casion for ax Hob.”

“You black rascal, you know well enough I was not there—that I was not within five miles of the spot, either to-day, yesterday, or for ten days back.”

“Berry true, mosser—if you no dere, you no dere. Hob nebber say one ting when mosser say ’noder.”

The unfortunate counsellor, desperate with the deference of his body servant, now absolutely perspired with rage; while, to the infinite amusement of all, in an endeavour to strike the pliable witness, who adroitly dodged the blow, the lawyer, not over-active of frame, plunged incontinently forward, and paused not in his headlong determination until he measured himself at length upon the ground. The laugh which succeeded was one of effectual discomfiture, and the helpless barrister made good his retreat from a field so unpromising, by a pursuit of the swift-footed negro, taking care not to return from the chase. Colleton, who had regarded this interlude with a stern brow and a wrathful spirit, now spoke, addressing Munro—

“You affirm most strongly for this villain, but your speech is all in vain if its object be to satisfy my doubts. What effect it may have upon our hearers is quite another matter. You cannot swear me out of my conviction and the integrity of my senses. I am resolute in the one belief, and do not hesitate here, and in the presence of himself and all of you, to pronounce him again all the scoun-

drel I declared him to be at first ; in the teeth of all your denials not less than of his. But—perhaps, as you answer for him so readily and so well, let us know, for doubtless you can, by what chance he came by that brand, that fine impress which he wears so happily upon his cheek. Can you not inform him where he got it—on what road he met with it—and whether the devil or my horse's heel gave it him !”

“ If your object be merely to insult me, young man, I forgive it. You are quite too young for me to punish, and I have only pity for the indiscretion that moves you to unprofitable violence at this time and in this place, where you see but little respect is shown to those who invade us with harsh words or actions. As for your charge against Rivers, I happen to know that it is unfounded, and my evidence alone would be sufficient for the purpose of his defence. If however, he were guilty of the attempt, as you allege, of what avail is it for you to make it. Look around you, young man ?” taking the youth aside as he spoke in moderated terms—“ you have eyes and understanding, and can answer the question for yourself. Who is here to arrest him ? Who would desire, who would dare to make the endeavour ? We are all here equally interested in his escape, were he a criminal in this respect, because we are all here”—and his voice fell in such a manner as to be accommodated to the senses of the youth alone—“ equally guilty of violating the same laws, and by an offence, in comparison with which that against you would be entirely lost sight of. There is the court-house, it is true—and there the jail—but we seldom see sheriff, judge, or jailer. When they do make their appearance, which is not often, they are glad enough to get away again.

If we here suffer injury from one another, we must out to take justice into our own hands—as *you* allege yourself partly to have done in this case—and there the matter generally ends. Rivers you think assaulted you and got the worst of it. You got off with but little harm yourself, and a reasonable man ought to be satisfied. Nothing more need be said of it. This is the wisest course, let me advise you. Be quiet about the matter, go on your way, and leave us to ourselves. Better suffer a little wrong, and seem to know nothing of it, than risk a quarrel with those, who, having once put themselves out of the shelter of the laws, take every opportunity of putting them at defiance. And what if you were to push the matter, where will the sheriff or the military find us? In a week and the judge will arrive, and the court will be in session. For that week we shall be out of the way. Nobody shall know—nobody can find us. This day's work will most probably give us all a great itch for travel."

Munro had, in truth, made out a very plain case; and his representations, in the main, were all correct. The youth felt their force, and his reason readily assented to the plain sense course which they pointed out. Contenting himself therefore with reiterating the charge, he concluded with saying that, for the present, he would let the affair rest. "Until the ruffian"—thus he phrased it, "had answered the penalties of the laws for his subsequent and more heinous offence against them, he should be silent."

"But I have not done with you, young sir," was the immediate speech of Rivers; his self-confidence and much of his composure returned, as with a fierce and malignant look, and a quick stride, he approached the youth. "You have thought proper

to make a foul charge against me which I have denied. It has been shown that your assertion is unfounded, yet you persist in it, and offer no atonement. I now demand redress—the redress of a gentleman. You know the custom of the country, and regard your own character, I should think, too highly to refuse me satisfaction. You have pistols, and here are rifles and dirks. Take your choice.”

The youth looked upon him with ineffable scorn as he replied:—

“You mistake me, sirrah, if you think I can notice your call with any thing but contempt.”

“What! will you not fight—not fight? not back your words?”

“Not with you!” was the calm reply.

“You refuse me satisfaction, after insulting me!”

“I always took him for a poor chicken, from the first time I set eyes on him,” said one of the spectators.

“Yes, I didn’t think much of him, when he refused to join us at first,” was the remark of another.

“This comes of so much crowing—Brag is a good dog, but Holdfast is better,” went on a third, and each man had his remark upon Colleton’s seeming timidity. Scorn and indignation were in all faces around him, and Forrester, at length, awakened from his stupor by the tide of fierce comment setting in upon his friend from all quarters, now thought it time to interfere.

“Come, ’squire, how’s this? Don’t give way—give him satisfaction, as he calls it, and send the lead into his gizzard. It will be no harm done, in putting it to such a creature as that. Don’t let him crow over old Carolina—don’t now, ’squire? You can hit him as easy as a barn door, for I saw your

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shot to-day—Don't be afraid, now—stand up, and I'll back you against the whole of them."

"Ay, bring him forward, Forrester. Let him be a man, if he can," was the speech of one of the party.

"Come, 'squire—let me say that you are ready. I'll mark off the ground, and you shall have fair play," was the earnest speech of the woodman in tones of entreaty.

"You mistake me greatly, Forrester, if you suppose for a moment that I will contend on equal terms with such a wretch. He is a common robber and an outlaw, whom I have denounced as such, and whom I cannot therefore fight with. Were he a gentleman, or had he any pretensions to the character, you should have no need to urge me on, I assure you."

"I know that, 'squire, and therefore it provokes me to think that the skunk should get off. Can't you, now, lay aside the gentleman just long enough to wing him—now, do try!"

The youth smiled as he shook his head negatively. Forrester, with great anxiety, proceeded—

"But, squire, they won't know your reason for refusing, and they will set you down as afraid. They will call you a coward!"

"And what if they do, Forrester? They are not exactly the people about whose opinion I give myself any concern. I am not solicitous to gain credit for courage among them. If any of them doubt it, let them try me. Let one of them raise a hand or lift a finger upon me, and make the experiment. They will then find me ready and willing enough to defend myself from any outrage, come from what quarter it may."

"I'm afraid, squire, they can't be made to understand the difference between a gentleman and a

matter. Indeed, it isn't reasonable that they should, seeing that such a difference puts them out of any chance of dressing a proud fellow who carries his head too high. If you don't fight, 'squire, I must, if it's only for the honour of old Carolina. So here goes."

The woodman threw off his coat, and taking up his rifle, substituted a new for the old flint, and furnishing the pan with fresh priming, before our hero could well understand the proposed and novel arrangement so as to interpose in its arrest, he advanced to the spot where Rivers stood, apparently awaiting the youth's decision, and slapping him upon the shoulder, thus addressed him—

"I say, Guy Rivers—the 'squire thinks you too great a blackguard for him to handle, and leaves all the matter to me. Now you see, as I've done *that* to-day which I take it makes me just as great a blackguard as yourself, I stand up in his place. So here's for you. You needn't make any excuse, and say you have no quarrel with me, for as I am to handle you in his place, you will consider me to say every thing that he has said—every word of it; and, in addition to that, if more be necessary, you must know, I think you a mere skunk, and I've been wanting to have a fair lick at you for a monstrous long season."

"You shall not interfere, Forrester, now, and in this manner, on any pretence, for the shelter of the coward, who, having insulted me, now refuses to give me satisfaction. If you have any thing to ask at my hands, when I have done with him I shall be ready for you," was the reply of Rivers.

"You hear that, 'squire. I told you so. He has called you a coward, and you will have to fight him at last."

"I do not see the necessity for that, Forrester,

and beg that you will undertake no fighting on my account. When my person or honour is in danger, I am man enough to take care of myself; and, when I am not, my neighbour or friend can do me no service by taking my place. As for this felon, the hangman for him—nobody else."

Maddened, not less by the cool determination of Colleton than by the contemptuous conclusion of his speech, Rivers, without a word, sprang fiercely upon him with a dirk, drawn from his bosom with concerted motion as he made the leap—striking, as he approached, a blow at the unguarded breast of the youth, which, from the fell and fiendish aim and effort, must have resulted fatally had he not been properly prepared for some such attempt. Ralph was in his prime, however, of vigorous make and muscle, and well practised in the agile sports and athletic exercises of woodland life. He saw the intent in the mischievous glance of his enemy's eye, in time to guard himself against it; and, suddenly changing his position, as the body of his antagonist was nearly upon him, he eluded the blow, and the force and impetus employed in the effort bore the assassin forward. Before he could arrest his own progress, the youth had closed in upon him, and by a dexterous use of his foot, in a manner well known to the American woodman, Rivers, without being able to interpose the slightest obstacle to the new direction thus given him, was forcibly hurled to the ground. Before he could recover, the youth was upon him. His blood was now at fever heat, for he had not heard the taunts upon his courage from all around him with indifference, though he had borne them with a laudable degree of patience throughout. His eye shot forth fires almost as malignant as

those of his opponent. One of his hands was wreathed in the neckcloth of his prostrate foe, while the other was employed in freeing his own dirk from the incumbrances of his vest. This took little time, and he would not have hesitated in the blow, when the interposition of those present bore him off, and permitted the fallen and stunned man to recover his feet. It was at this moment that the honest friendship of Forrester was to be tried and tested. The sympathies of those around were most generally with the ruffian; and the aspect of affairs was something unlucky, when the latter was not only permitted to recommence the attack, but when the youth was pinioned to the ground by others of the gang, and disarmed of all defence. The moment was perilous; and, whooping like a savage, Forrester leapt in between, dealing at the same time his powerful blows from one to the other, right and left, and making a clear field around the youth.

"Fair play is all I ask, boys—fair play, and we can lick the whole of you. Hurra for old Carolina. Who's he says a word against her? Let him stand up, and be knocked down. How's it, squire—you an't hurt, I reckon. I hope not; if you are, I'll have a shot with Rivers myself on the spot."

But Munro interposed.

"We have had enough outcry, Forrester. Let us have no more. Take this young man along with you, or it will be worse for him."

"Well, Wat Munro, all the 'squire wants is fair play—fair play for both of us, and we'll take the field, man after man. I tell you what, Munro, in our parts the chickens are always hatched with spurs, and the children born with their eye teeth. We know something too about whipping our

he subject of the murder of the guard, for so he himself called his crime, his feeling was so intensely agonizing that Ralph, though as much shocked as himself at the events, found it necessary to employ sedative language, and to forbear all manner of rebuke. At an early hour of the morning, they proceeded in company to the village—Forrester having to complete certain arrangements prior to his flight; which, by the advice of Colleton, he had at once determined upon. Such, no doubt, was the determination of many among them not having those resources, in a familiarity with crime and criminal associations, which were common to such as Munro and Rivers.

The aspect of the village was somewhat varied from its wont. Its people were not so far gone in familiarity with occurrences like those of the preceding day, as to be utterly insensible to their consequences; and a chill inertness pervaded all faces, and set at defiance every endeavour on the part of the few who had led, to put the greater number in better spirits, either with themselves or those around them. They were men habituated, it may be, to villanies; but of a petty description, and far beneath that which we have just recorded. It is not therefore to be wondered at, if, when the momentary impulse had passed away, they felt numerous misgivings. They were all assembled, as on the day before—their new allies with them—arms in their hands, but seemingly without much disposition for their use. They sauntered unconsciously about the village, in little groups or individually, without concert or combination, and with suspicious or hesitating eye. Occasionally, the accents of a single voice broke the general silence among them, though but for a single moment; and then, with a startling and painful influence, which imparted a still deeper

sense of gloom to the spirits of all. It appeared to come laden with a mysterious and strange terror, and the speaker, aptly personifying the Fear in Collins's fine Ode on the Passions, "shrunk from the sounds himself had made." Ralph, in company with Forrester, made his appearance among the squatters while thus situated. Seeing them armed as on the previous day, he was apprehensive of some new evil; and as he approached the several stray groups, made known his apprehensions to his companion in strong language. He was not altogether assured of Forrester's own compunction, and the appearance of those around almost persuaded him to doubt his sincerity. "Why are these people assembled, Forrester—is there any thing new—is there more to be done—more blood-letting—more crime and violence—are they still unsatisfied?"

The earnestness of the inquirer was coupled with a sternness of eye and a warmth of accent which had in them much, that, under other circumstances and at other times, would have been sorely offensive to the sturdy woodman; whose spirit, any thing in the guise of rebuke would have been calculated to vex. But he was burdened with thoughts at the moment, which, in a sufficiently monitorial character, humbled him with a scourge that lacerated at every stroke.

"God forbid, 'squire, that more harm should be done. There has been more done already than any of us shall well get rid of. I wish to heaven I had taken caution from you. But I was mad, 'squire—mad to the heart, and became the willing tool of men not so mad, but more evil than I! God forbid, sir, that there should be more harm done."

"Then why this assembly? Why do the villa-

gers, and these ragged and savage fellows whom you have incorporated among you—why do they lounge about idly, with arms in their hands, and faces that still seem bent on mischief?”

“Because, squire, it’s impossible to do otherwise. We can’t go to work, for the life of us, if we wished to; we all feel that we have gone too far, and those, whose own consciences do not trouble them, are yet too much troubled by fear of the consequences to be in any hurry to take up handspike or hammer again in this quarter of the world.”

The too guilty man had indeed spoken his own and the condition of the people among whom he lived. They could now see and feel the fruits of that rash error which had led them on; but their consciousness came too late for retrieval, and they now wondered, with a simplicity truly surprising to those who know with what facility an uneducated and warm people may be led to their own ruin, that this consciousness had not come to them before. Ralph, attended by Forrester, advanced among the crowd; as he did so, all eyes were turned upon him, and a sullen conference took place, having a reference to himself, between Munro and a few other of the ringleaders. This conference was brief, and as soon as it was concluded, the landlord turned to the youth, and spoke as follows:—

“You were a witness, Mr. Colleton, of this whole transaction; and can say whether the soldiers were not guilty of the most unprovoked assault upon us, without reason or right.”

“I can say no such thing, sir,” was his reply. “On the contrary, I am compelled to say, that a more horrible and unjustifiable transaction I never witnessed. I must say that they were not the aggressors.”

“How unjustifiable, young sir,” quickly and


sternly retorted the landlord. "Did you hold us ridden down by the soldiery—did t attack us in our trenches—in our castle, as i and have we not a right to defend our cast assailants. They took the adventure at the and suffered accordingly."

"I know not what your title may be grounds you have defended so successful which you have styled your castle—nor stop to inquire. I do not believe that yo either gave you possession or authorized y fence of them in this cruel manner. The however, is between you and your country own impressions are decidedly against yo were I called upon for an opinion as to yo of asserting your pretended right, I should c it as brutal and barbarous, and wholly with cuse or justification, whether examined by or human laws."

"A sermon—a sermon from the young p —come, boys, let's give him Old Hundred. sir, you promise almost as well as the par heard yesterday ; and will take lessons from advised by me. But go on—come to a mount upon the stump, where you can b seen and heard."

The cheek of the youth glowed with ind at the speech of the ruffian, but he replied concentrated calmness that was full of signi

"You mistake me greatly, sir, if you in am to be provoked into an indiscreet cont you by any taunt which you can utter. myself somewhat in the tact with which I c a ruffian, and having, at an early period c acquaintance, seen what you were, I cannot you in any other than a single point o Were you not what I know you to be, w



might have been the difference of force between us, I should ere this have driven my dirk into your throat."

"Why, that's something like, now—that's what I call manly. You do seem to have some pluck in you, young sir, though you might make more use of it. I like a fellow that can feel when he's touched; and don't think a bit the worse of you that you think ill of me, and tell me so. But that's not the thing now. We must talk of other matters. You must answer a civil question or two for the satisfaction of the company. We want to know, sir, if you are disposed to tell tales out of school—if we may apprehend any interference on your part between us and the state. Will you tell the authorities what you saw?"

The youth made no answer to this question, but turning contemptuously upon his heel, was about to leave the circle, around which the assembly, in visible anxiety for his reply, was now beginning to crowd.

"Stay, young master, not so fast. You must give us some answer before you are off. Let us know what we are to expect. Whether, if called upon by any authority, you would reveal what you know of this business?" was the further inquiry of Munro.

"I certainly should—every word of it. I should at once say that you were all criminal, and describe you as the chief actor and instigator in this unhappy affair."

The response of Colleton had been unhesitating and immediate; and having given it, he passed through the throng and left the crowd, which, suddenly parting, made way for him in front. Guy Rivers, in an under-tone, muttered in the ear of Munro as he left the circle—"That, by the eternal

God, he shall never do. Are you satisfied now of the necessity of silencing him." Munro simply made a sign of silence, and took no seeming note of his departure ; but his determination was made, and there was now no obstacle in that quarter to the long-contemplated vengeance of his confederate. While this matter was in progress among the villagers, Counsellor Pippin vexed himself and his man Hob not a little with inquiries as to the manner in which he should contrive to make some professional business grow out of it. He could not well expect any of the persons concerned voluntarily to convict themselves ; and his thoughts turned necessarily upon our hero, as the only one on whom he could rest his desire in this particular. We have seen with what indifferent success his own adventure on the field of action, and when the danger was all well over, was attended ; but he had heard and seen enough to persuade himself that but little was wanting, without appearing in the matter himself, to induce Ralph to prosecute Rivers for the attempt upon his life, a charge which, in his presence, he had heard him make. He calculated in this way to secure himself in two jobs—as magistrate, to institute the initial proceedings by which Rivers was to be brought to trial, and the expense of which Ralph was required to pay—and, as an attorney at law, and the only one of which the village might boast, to have the satisfaction of defending and clearing the criminal. Such being the result of his deliberations, he despatched Hob with a note to Ralph, requesting to see him at the earliest possible moment, upon business of the last importance. Hob arrived at the inn just at the time when, in the court in front, Ralph, in company with the woodman, had joined the villagers there assembled. Hob, who from long familiarity

with the habits of his master, had acquired something of a like disposition, felt exceedingly anxious to hear what was going on ; but knowing his situation, and duly valuing his own importance as the servant of so great a man as the village lawyer, he conceived it necessary to proceed with due and proper caution. It is more than probable that his presence would have been unregarded had he made his approaches freely and with confidence ; but Hob was outrageously ambitious, and mystery was delightful. He went to work in the Indian manner, and what with occasionally taking the cover, now of a bush, now of a pine-tree, and now of a convenient hillock, Hob had got himself very comfortably lodged in the recess of an old ditch, originally cut to carry off a body of water which rested on what was now in part the public mall. Becoming interested in the proceedings, and hearing of the departure of Ralph, to whom he had been despatched, his head gradually assumed a more elevated position—he soon forgot his precaution, and the shoulders of the spy, neither the most diminutive nor graceful, becoming rather too protuberant, were saluted with a smart assault, vigorously kept up by the assailant, to whom the use of the hickory appeared a familiar matter. Hob roared lustily, and was dragged from his cover. The note was found upon him, and still further tended to exaggerate the hostile feeling which the party now entertained for the youth. Under the terrors of the lash, Hob confessed a great deal more than was true, and roused into a part forgetfulness of their offence by the increased prospect of its punishment, which the negro had unhesitatingly represented as near at hand, they proceeded to the office of the lawyer. It was in vain that Pippin denied all the statements of his negro—his note was thrust

into his face; and without scruple, seizing upon his papers, they consigned to the flames, deed, process, and document—all the fair and unfair proceedings alike, of the lawyer, collected carefully through a busy period of thirty years' litigation. They would have proceeded in like manner to the treatment of Ralph, but that Guy Rivers himself interposed to allay, and otherwise direct their fury. The cunning ruffian well knew that Forrester would stand by the youth, and unwilling to incur any risk, where the game in another way seemed so secure, he succeeded in quieting the party, by claiming to himself the privilege, on the part of his wounded honour, of a fair field with one who had so grievously assailed it. Taking the landlord aside, therefore, they discussed various propositions for taking the life of one hateful to the one person and dangerous to them all. Munro was now not unwilling to recognise the necessity of taking him off; and without entering into the feelings of Rivers, which were almost entirely personal, he gave his assent to the deed, the mode of performing which was somewhat to depend upon circumstances. These will find their due development as we proceed, and it is not necessary that we should speak further of them now.

In the mean while, Ralph had returned to the village inn, encountering, at the first step, upon entering the threshold, the person of the very interesting girl, almost the only redeeming spirit of that establishment. She had heard of the occurrence, as who, indeed, had not—and the first expression of her face as her eyes met those of Ralph, though with a smile, had in it something of a rebuke for not having taken the counsel which she had given him on his departure from the place of prayer. With a gentleness strictly in character, he conversed with

her for some time on indifferent topics—surprised at every uttered word from her lips—so musical, so true to the modest weaknesses of her own, yet so full of the wisdom and energy which is the more legitimate characteristic of the other sex. At length she brought him back to the subject of the recent strife.

“You must go from this place, Mr. Colleton—you are not safe in this house—in this country. You can travel now without inconvenience from your late injuries, which do not appear to affect you; and the sooner you are gone the better for your safety. There are those here”—and she looked around with a studious caution as she spoke, while her voice sunk into a whisper—“who only wait the hour and the opportunity to—” and here her voice faltered as if she felt the imagined prospect—“to put you to a merciless death. Believe me, and in your confident strength do not despise my warnings. Nothing but prudence and flight can save you.”

“Why,” said the youth, smiling, and taking her hand in reply, “why should I fear to linger in a region, where one so much more alive to its sternnesses than myself may yet dare to abide. Think you, fair Lucy, that I am less hardy—less fearless of the dangers and the difficulties of this region than yourself. You little know how much at this moment my spirit is willing to encounter”—and as he spoke, though his lips wore a smile, there was a stern sadness in his look, and a gloomy contraction of his brow, which made the expression one of the fullest melancholy.

The girl looked upon him with an eye full of a deep, though unconscious interest. She seemed desirous of searching into that spirit which he had described as so reckless. Withdrawing her hand

suddenly, however, as if now for the first time aware of its position, she replied hastily :—

“Yet, I pray you, Mr. Colleton, let not any sorrow make you indifferent to the warning I have given you. There is danger—more danger here to you than to me—though to me—” the tears filled in her eyes as she spoke, and her head sunk down on her breast with an air of the deepest mental abandonment—“there is more than death.”

The youth again took her hand warmly. He understood too well the signification of her speech, and the sad sacrifice which it referred to; and an interest in her fate was awakened in his bosom, which made him for a moment forget himself and the gentle Edith of his own dreams.

“Command me, Miss Munro, though I peril my life in your behalf; say that I can serve you in any thing, and trust me to obey.”

She shook her head mournfully, but without reply. Again he pressed his services, which were still refused. A little more firmly, however, she again urged his departure.

“My solicitations have no idle origin. Believe me, you are in danger, and have but little time for delay. I would not thus hurry you, but that I would not have you perish. No, no! you have been gentle and kind, as few others have been, to the poor orphan. And, though I would still see and hear you, I would not that you should suffer. I should rather suffer myself.”

Much of this was evidently uttered with the most childish unconsciousness. Her mind was obviously deeply excited with her fears, and when the youth assured her, in answer to her inquiries, that he should proceed in the morning on his journey, she interrupted him quickly—

“To-day—to-day—now—do not delay, I pray

you. You know not the perils which a night may bring forth."

When assured that he himself could perceive no cause of peril, and when, with a manner sufficiently lofty, he gave her to understand that a feeling of pride alone, if there were no other cause, would prevent a procedure savouring so much of flight, she shook her head mournfully, though saying nothing. In reply to his offer of service, she returned him her thanks, but assuring him he could do her none, she retired from the apartment.

CHAPTER XVII.

"Love's prayer is urged in vain, when narrow souls
Judge of its wants and longings. Wealth is stern,
And the idolatrous love of gold will bide
No homage but its own."

DURING the progress of the dialogue narrated in the conclusion of our last chapter, Forrester had absented himself, as much probably with a delicate sense of courtesy, which anticipated some further results than came from it, as with the view to the consummation of some private matters of his own. He now returned, and signifying his readiness to Ralph, they mounted their horses and proceeded on a proposed ride out of the village, in which Forrester had promised to show the youth a pleasanter region and neighbourhood. This ride, however, was rather of a gloomy tendency, as its influences were lost in the utterance and free exhibition to Ralph of the mental sufferings of his companion. Naturally of a good spirit and temper, his heart,

though strong of endurance and fearless of trial, had not yet been greatly hardened by the world's circumstance. The cold droppings of the bitter waters, however they might have worn into, had not altogether petrified it; and his feelings, coupled with and at all times acted upon by a southern fancy, did not fail to depict to his own sense, and in the most lively colours, the offence of which he had been guilty. It was with a reproachful and troublesome consciousness, therefore, that he now addressed his more youthful companion on the subject so fearfully presented to his thought. He had already, in their brief acquaintance, found in Ralph a firm and friendly adviser, and acknowledging in his person all the understood superiorities of polished manners and correct education, he did not scruple to come to him for advice in his present difficulties. Ralph, fully comprehending his distress, and conscious how little of his fault had been premeditated,—estimating, too, the many good qualities apparent in his character—did not withhold his counsel.

“I can say little to you now, Forrester, in the way of advice, so long as you continue to herd with the men who have already led you into so much mischief. You appear to me, and must appear to all men, while coupled with such associations, as voluntarily choosing your ground, and taking all the consequences of its position. As there would seem no necessity for your dwelling longer among them, you certainly do make your choice in thus continuing their associate.”

“Not so much a matter of choice, now, 'squire, as you imagine. It was, to be sure, choice at first, but then I did not know the people I had to deal with; and when I did, you see, the circumstances were altered.”

"How, and by what means?"

"Why, then, 'squire, you must know, and I see no reason to keep the thing from you, I took a liking, a short time after I came here, to a young woman, the daughter of one of our diggers, and she to me—at least so she says, and I must confess I'm not unwilling to believe her; though it is difficult to say—these women you know—" and as he left the unfinished sentence, he glanced significantly to the youth's face with an expression which the latter thus interpreted—

"Are not, you would say, at all times to be relied on."

"Why, no, 'squire—I would not exactly say that—that might be something too much of a speech. I did mean to say, from what we see daily, that it isn't always they know their own minds."

"There is some truth, Forrester, in the distinction, and I have thought so before. I am persuaded that the gentler sex is far less given to deceit than our own; but their opinions and feelings, on the other hand, are formed with infinitely more frequency and facility, and more readily acted upon by passing and occasional influences. Their very susceptibility to the most light and casual impressions, is, of itself, calculated to render vacillating their estimate of things and characters. They are creatures of such delicate construction, and their affections are of such like character, that, like all fine machinery, they are perpetually operated on by the atmosphere, the winds, the dew, and the sunshine. The frost blights and the sun blisters; and a kind or stern accent elevates or depresses, where, with us, they might pass unheeded or unheard. We are more cunning—more shy and cautious; and seldom, after a certain age, let our affections out of our own custody. We learn

very soon in life—indeed, we are compelled to learn, in our own defence, at a very early period—to go into the world as if we were going into battle. We send out spies, keep sentinels on duty, man our defences, carry arms in our bosoms, which we cover with a buckler, though, with the policy of a court, we conceal that in turn with a silken and embroidered vestment. We watch every erring thought—we learn to be equivocal of speech; and our very hearts, as the Indians phrase it, are taught to speak their desires with a double tongue. We are perpetually on the look-out for enemies and attack; we dread pitfalls and circumventions, and we feel that every face which we encounter is a smiling deceit—every honeyed word a blandishment meant to betray us. These are lessons which society, as at present constituted, teaches of itself. With women the case is essentially different. They have few of these influences to pervert and mislead. They have nothing to do in the market-place—they are not candidates for place or power—they have not the ambition which is always struggling for state and for self; but with a wisdom in this, that might avail us wonderfully in all other respects, they are kept apart, as things for love and worship—domestic divinities, whose true altar-place is the fireside; whose true sway is over fond hearts, generous sensibilities, and immaculate honour. Where should they learn to contend with guile—to acquire cunning and circumspection—to guard the heart—to keep sweet affections locked up coldly, like mountain waters? Shall we wonder that they sometimes deceive themselves rather than their neighbours—that they sometimes misapprehend their own feelings, and mistake for love some less absorbing intruder, who, but lights upon the heart for a single instant, as a bird upon his spray, to rest or to plume

his pinions, and be off with the very next zephyr. But all this is wide of the mark, Forrester, and keeps you from your story."

"My story isn't much, Master Colleton, and is easily told. I love Kate, and as I said before, I believe Kate loves me; and though it be scarcely a sign of manliness to confess so much, yet I must say to you, 'squire, that I love her so very much that I cannot do without her."

"I honour your avowal, Forrester, and see nothing unmanly or unbecoming in the sentiment you profess. On the contrary, such a feeling, in my mind, more truly than any other, indicates the presence and possession of those very qualities out of which true manhood is made. The creature who prides himself chiefly upon his insensibilities, has no more claim to be considered a human being than the trees that gather around us, or the rocks over which we travel."

"Well, 'squire, I believe you are right, and I am glad that such is your opinion, for now I shall be able to speak to you more freely upon this subject. Indeed, you talk about the thing so knowingly, that I should not be surprised, 'squire, to find out that you too had something of the same sort troubling your heart, though here you be travelling far from home and among strangers."

The remark of Forrester was put knowingly, and with an air of arch inquiry. A slight shadow passed over and clouded the face of the youth, and for a moment his brow was wrinkled into sternness; but hastily suppressing the awakened emotion, whatever its origin might have been, he simply replied, in an indirect rebuke, which his companion very readily comprehended—

"You were speaking of your own heart, I believe, Forrester, and not of mine. If you please,

we will confine ourselves to the one territory, particularly as it promises to find us sufficient employment of itself, without rendering it necessary that we should cross over to any other."

"It's a true word, 'squire—the business of the one territory is sufficient for me, at this time, and more than I shall well get through with; but though I know this, somehow or other, I want to forget it all, if possible; and sometimes I close my eyes in the hope to shut out ugly thoughts."

"The feeling is melancholy enough, but it is just the one which should test your manhood. It is not for one who has been all his life buffeting with the world and ill-fortune, to despond at every mischance or misdeed. Proceed with your narrative; and in providing for the future, you will be able to forget not a little of the past."

"You are right, 'squire, I will be a man, and stand my chance, whether good or ill, like a man, as I have always been. Well, as I was saying, Kate is neither unkind nor unwilling, and the only difficulty is with her father. He is now mighty fond of the needful, and won't hear to our marriage until I have a good foundation, and something to go upon. It is this, you see, which keeps me here, shoulder to shoulder with these men, whom I like and love just as little perhaps as yourself; and it was because the soldiers came upon us just as I was beginning to lay up a little from my earnings, that made me desperate. I dreaded to lose what I had so long been working for, and whenever the thought of Kate came through my brain, I grew rash and ready for any mischief; and this is just the way in which I ran headlong into this difficulty."

"It is melancholy, Forrester, to think, that with such a feeling as that you profess for this young woman, you should be so little regardful of her

peace or your own—that you should plunge so madly into strife and crime, and proceed to the commission of acts which not only embitter your life, but must defeat the very hopes and expectations for which you live.”

“It’s the nature of the beast,” replied the woodman, with a melancholy shake of the head, in a phrase which has become a proverb of familiar use in the south. “‘It’s the nature of the beast,’ squire—I never seem to think about a thing until it’s all over, and too late to mend it. It’s a sad misfortune to have such a temper, and yesterday’s work tells me so much more forcibly than I can ever tell myself. But what am I to do, squire? that’s what I want to know. Can you say nothing to me which will put me in better humour with myself—can you give me no advice, no consolation. Say any thing—any thing which will make me think less about this matter.”

The conscience of the unhappy criminal was indeed busy, and he spoke in tones of deep, though suppressed emotion and energy. The youth did not pretend to console—he well knew that the mental nature would have its course, and to withstand or arrest it would only have the effect of further provoking its morbidity. He replied calmly, but feelingly—

“Your situation is unhappy, Forrester, and calls for serious reflection. It is not for me to offer much, if any advice, to one so much more experienced than myself. Yet my thoughts are at your service for what they are worth. You cannot, of course, hope to remain in the country after this; yet, in flying from that justice to which you will have made no atonement, you will not necessarily escape the consequences of such a crime, which, I feel satisfied, will, for a long season, rest heavily

upon a spirit such as yours. Your confederates have greatly the advantage of you in this particular. The fear of human penalties is with them the only fear. Your severest judge will be your own heart, and from that you may not fly. With regard to your affections I can say little. I know not what may be your resources—your means of life, and the nature of those enterprises which, in another region, you might pursue. In the west, you would be secure from punishment—the wants of life in the wilderness are few, and of easy attainment—why not marry the young woman, and let her fly with you to happiness and safety.”

“And wouldn’t I do so, ’squire?—I would be a happy fellow if I could. But her father will never consent. He had no hand in yesterday’s business, and I wonder at that too, for he’s mighty apt at all such scrapes; and he will not therefore be so very ready to perceive the necessity of my flight—certainly not of hers, she being his only child; and though a tough old sort of chap, he’s main fond of her.”

“See him about it at once, then, and if he does not consent, the only difficulty is in the delay and further protraction of your union. It would be very easy, when you are once well-settled, to claim her as your wife.”

“That’s all very true and very reasonable, ’squire—but it’s rather hard, this waiting. Here, for five years, have I been playing this sort of game, and it goes greatly against the grain to have to begin anew and in a new place. But here’s where the old buck lives. It’s quite a snug farm, as you may see. He’s pretty well off, and by one little end or the other, contrives to make it look smarter and smarter every year—but then he’s just as close as a corkscrew, and quite mean in his ways. And—

there's Kate, 'squire, looking from the window. Now, an't she a sweet creature? Come, 'light—you shall see her close. Make yourself quite at home, as I do. I make free, for you see the old people have all along looked upon me as a son, seeing that I am to be one at some time or other."

They were now at the entrance of as smiling a cottage and settlement as a lover of romance might well desire to look upon. Every thing had a cheery, sunshiny aspect, looking life, comfort, and the "all in all content"—and with a feeling of pleasure kindled anew in his bosom by the prospect, Ralph complied readily with the frank and somewhat informal invitation of his companion, and was soon made perfectly at home by the freedom and ease which characterized the manners of the young girl who descended to receive them. A slight suffusion of the cheek and a downcast eye, upon the entrance of her lover, indicated a gratified consciousness on the part of the maiden which did not look amiss. She was seemingly a gentle, playful creature, extremely young, apparently without a thought of guile, and altogether untouched with a solitary presentiment of the unhappy fortunes in store for her. Her mother having now made her appearance, soon employed the youth in occasional discourse, which furnished sufficient opportunity to the betrothed to pursue their own conversation, in a quiet corner of the same room, in that under-tone which, where lovers are concerned, is of all others the most delightful and emphatic. True love is always timid; he too, as well as fear, is apt to shrink back at the "sound himself has made." His words are few and the tones feeble. He throws his thoughts into his eyes, and they speak enough for all his purposes. On the present occasion, however, he was dumb from other influences, and the

hesitating voice, the guilty look, the unquiet manner, sufficiently spoke on the part of her lover what his own tongue refused to whisper in the ears of the maiden. He strove, but vainly, to relate the melancholy event to which we have already sufficiently alluded. His words were broken and confused, but she gathered enough, in part, to comprehend the affair, though still ignorant of the precise actors and sufferers. The heart of Katharine was one of deep-seated tenderness, and it may not be easy to describe the shock which the intelligence gave her. She did not hear him through without ejaculations of horror, sufficiently fervent and loud to provoke the glance of her mother, who did not, however, though turning her looks inquiringly and frequently upon the two, venture upon any inquiry, or offer any remark. The girl heard her lover patiently, but when he narrated the catastrophe, and told of the murder of the guard, she no longer struggled to restrain the feeling, now too strong for suppression. Her words broke through her lips quickly, as she exclaimed—

“But you, Mark—you had no part in this matter—you lent no aid—you gave no hand. You interfered, I am sure you did, to prevent the murder of the innocent men. Speak out, Mark, and tell me the truth, and relieve me from these horrible apprehensions.”

As she spoke, her small hand rested upon his wrist with a passionate energy, in full accordance with the spirit of her language. The head of the unhappy man sunk upon his breast—his eyes, dewily suffused, were cast upon the floor, and he spoke nothing, or inarticulately, in reply.

“What means this silence—what am I to believe—what am I to think, Mark Forrester? You cannot have given aid to those bad men, whom you

yourself despise. You have not so far forgotten yourself and me as to go on with that wicked man, Rivers, following his direction, to take away life—to spill blood as if it were water. You have not done this, Mark. Tell me at once that I am foolish to fear it for an instant—that it is not so.”

The person addressed strove, but in vain, to reply. The inarticulate sounds came forth chokingly from his lips without feature or substance. He strode impatiently up and down the apartment, followed by the young and excited maiden, who unconsciously pursued him with repeated inquiries; while her mother, awakened to the necessity of interference, vainly strove to find a solution of the mystery, and to quiet both of the parties.

“Will you not speak to me, Mark. Can you not—will you not answer?”

The unhappy man shook his head, in a perplexed and irritated manner, indicating his inability to reply—but concluding with pointing his finger impatiently to Ralph, who stood up, a surprised and anxious spectator of the scene. The maiden seemed to comprehend the intimation, and with an energy and boldness that would not well describe the accustomed habit of the young girl, with a hurried but firm step, she crossed the apartment to where stood the youth. Her eye was quick and searching—her words broken, but with an impetuous flow, indicating the anxiety and excitement which, while it accounted for, sufficiently excused the abruptness of her address, she spoke—

“Do, sir—say for this man that he had no hand in the matter—that he is free from the stain of blood. Speak for him, sir, I pray you—tell me that which he will not tell himself.”

The old lady now sought to interpose, and to apologize for her daughter.

"Why, Kate, Katharine—forgive her, sir—Kate—Katharine, my dear—you forget. You ask questions of the stranger without any consideration."

But she spoke to unconscious auditors, and Forrester, though still almost speechless, now interposed—

"Let her ask, mother—let her ask—let her know it all. He can say what I cannot. He can tell all. Speak out, 'squire—speak out—don't fear for me. It must come, and who can better tell of it than you who know it all."

Thus urged, Ralph, in few words, related the occurrence. Though carefully avoiding the use of epithet or phrase which might colour with an increased odium the connexion and conduct of Forrester with the affair, the offence admitted of so little apology or extenuation, that the delicacy with which the details were narrated availed but little in its mitigation; and an involuntary cry burst from mother and daughter alike, to which the hollow groan that came from the lips of Forrester furnished a fitting echo.

"And this is all true, Mark—must I believe all this?" was the inquiry of the young girl, after a brief interval. There was a desperate precipitance in the reply of Forrester—

"True—Katharine—true, every word of it is true. Do you not see it written in my face. Am I not choked—do not my knees tremble—and my hands—look for yourself—are they not covered with blood?"

The youth interposed, and for a moment doubted the sanity of his companion. He had spoken in figure—a mode of speech, which, it is a mistake in rhetoricians to ascribe only to an artificial origin, during a state of mental quiet. Deep passion and

strong excitements, we are bold to say, employ metaphor largely; and, upon an inspection of the criminal records of any country, it will be found that the most common narrations from persons deeply wrought upon by strong circumstances are abundantly stored with the evidence of what we assert.

"And how came it, Mark?"—was the inquiry of the maiden—"and why did you this thing?"

"Ay, you may well ask, and wonder. I cannot tell you. I was a fool—I was mad! I knew not what I did. From one thing I went on to another, and I knew nothing of what had been done until all was done. Some devil was at my elbow—some devil at my heart. I feel it there still—I am not yet free. I could do more—I could go yet farther. I could finish the damned work by another crime; and no crime either—since I should be myself the only victim, and well deserving a worse punishment."

The offender was deeply excited, and felt poignantly. For some time it tasked all the powers of Ralph's mind, and the seductive blandishments of the maiden herself, to allay the fever of his spirit; when at length he was something restored, the dialogue was renewed by an inquiry of the old lady as to the future destination of her anticipated son-in-law, for whom indeed she entertained a genuine affection.

"And what is to be the end of all this, Mark? What is it you propose to do—where will you fly?"

"To the nation, mother—where else? I must fly somewhere—give myself up to justice, or—" and he paused in the sentence so unpromisingly begun, while his eyes rolled with unaccustomed terrors, and his voice grew thick in his throat.

"Or, what—what mean you by that word, that look, Mark? I do not understand you—why speak you in this way, and to me?"—exclaimed the maiden, passionately interrupting him in a speech, which, though strictly the creature of his morbid spirit and present excitement was perhaps unnecessarily and something too wantonly indulged in.

"Forgive me, Katharine—dear Katharine—but you little know the madness and the misery at my heart."

"And have you no thought of mine, Mark? this deed of yours has brought misery, if not madness to it too—and speech like this might well be spared us now!"

"It is this very thought, Kate, which now increases my anguish. It is the thought that I have made you miserable, when I should have striven only to make you happy. The thought, too, that I must leave you—to see you perhaps never again—these unman—these madden me, Katharine; and I feel desperate like the man striving with his brother upon the plank in the broad ocean."

"And why part, Mark?—I see not this necessity!"

"Would you have me stay and perish? would you behold me, dragged perhaps from your own arms before the stern judge, and to a dreadful death? It will be so if I stay much longer. The State will not suffer this thing to pass over. The crime is too large—too fearful. Besides this, the Pony Club have lately committed several desperate offences, which have already attracted the notice of the Legislature. This very guard had been ordered to disperse them; and this affair will bring down a sufficient force to overrun all our settlements, and they may even penetrate the na-

tion itself, where we might otherwise find shelter. There will be no safety for me."

The despondence of the woodman increased as he spoke; and the young girl, as if unconscious of all spectators, in the confiding innocence of her heart, exclaimed, while her head sunk upon his shoulder—

"And why, Mark, may we not all fly together? There will be no reason now to remain here, since the miners are all to be dispersed."

"Well said, Kate—well said—" responded a voice at the entrance of the apartment, at the sound of which, the person addressed started with a visible trepidation, which destroyed all her previous energy of manner—"It is well thought on, Kate—there will, sure enough, be very little reason now for any of us to remain, since this ugly business; and the only question is as to what quarter we shall go. There is, however, just as little reason for our flight in company with Mark Forrester."

It was the father of the maiden who spoke—one who was the arbiter of her destinies, and so much the dictator in his household and over his family, that from his decision and authority there was suffered no appeal. Without pausing for a reply, he proceeded:—

"Our course, Mark, must now lie separate. You will take your route and I mine—we cannot take them together. As for my daughter, she cannot take up with you, seeing your present condition. Your affairs are not as they were when I consented to your engagement; therefore, the least said and thought about past matters, the better."

"But—" was the beginning of a reply from the sad and discarded lover, in which he was not

suffered to proceed. The old man was firm, and settled further controversy in short order.

"No talk, Mark—seeing that it's no use, and there's no occasion for it. It must be as I say. I cannot permit of Kate's connexion with a man in your situation, who the very next moment may be brought to the halter and bring shame upon her. Take your parting, and try to forget old times, my good fellow. I think well of and am sorry for you, Mark, but I can do nothing. The girl is my only child, and I must keep her from harm, if I can."

Mark battled the point with considerable warmth and vigour, and the scene was something further protracted, but need not here be prolonged. The father was obdurate, and too much dreaded by the members of his family to admit of much prayer or pleading on their part. Apart from this, his reason, though a stern, was a wise and a strong one. The intercession of Colleton warmly made, proved equally unavailing, and after a brief but painful parting with the maiden, Forrester remounted his horse, and in company with the youth departed for the village, distant some few miles. But the adieus of the lovers, in this instance, were not destined to be the last. In the narrow passage in which, removed from all sight or scrutiny, she hung drooping like a storm-beaten flower upon his bosom, he solicited, and not unsuccessfully, a private and a parting interview.

"To-night, then, at the old sycamore, as the moon rises,"—he whispered in her ear, as sadly and silently she withdrew from his embrace.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"I loved thee in so strained a purity,
That the blest gods, as angry with my fancy,
More bright in zeal than the devotion which
Cold lips blow to their deities, take thee from me."
Troilus and Cressida.

WITH Ralph, the unhappy woodman, thus even denied to hope, returned, more miserable than before, to the village of Chestatee. The crowd there had been largely diminished. The more obnoxious among the offenders, those who, having taken the most prominent parts, apprehended recognition—had taken themselves as much out of sight as possible. Even Munro and Rivers, with all their hardihood, were no longer to be seen, and those still lingering in the village were such as under no circumstances might well provoke suspicion of 'subtle deed and counter enterprise.' They were the fat men, the beef of society—loving long speeches and goodly cheer. The two friends, for so we may call them, were left almost in the exclusive possession of the public, and without observation discussed their several plans of departure. Forrester had determined to commence his journey that very night; while Ralph, with what might seem headstrong rashness, chose the ensuing day for a like purpose. But the youth was not without his reasons for this determination. He knew perfectly well that he was in peril, but felt also that this peril would be met with much more difficulty by night than by day. Deeming himself secure,

tend, at this time of day, to limit the knowledge of its sweet fitness for the purposes of love, to them alone. They had tasted of its sweets a thousand times, and could well understand and appreciate that air of romantic and fairy-like seclusion which so much distinguished it, and which served admirably in concert with the uses to which it was now appropriated. The tree grew within and surmounted a little hollow, formed by the even and combined natural descents, to that common centre, of four hills, beautifully grouped, which surrounded and completely fenced it in. Their descents were smooth and even, without a single abruptness, to the bottom, in the centre of which rose the sycamore, which, from its own situation, conferred the name of Sycamore Hollow to the sweet spot upon which it stood. A spring, trickling from beneath its roots, shaded and surmounted by its folding branches from the thirsty heats of the summer sun, kept up a low and continuous prattle with the pebbles over which it made its way, that consorted sweetly with the secluded harmonies that overmantled, as with a mighty wing, the sheltered place. Scenes like these are abundant enough in the southern country; and by their quiet, unobtrusive, and softer beauties, would seem, and not inefficiently or feebly, to supply in most respects the wants of those bolder characteristics, in which nature in those regions is confessedly deficient. Whatever may be the want of southern scenery in stupendousness or sublimity, it is, we are inclined to believe, more than made up in those thousand quiet and wooing charms of location, which seem designed expressly for the hamlet and the cottage—the evening dance—the midday repose and rural banquet—and all those numberless practices of a small and well-intentioned society, which win

the affections into limpid and ever-living currents, touched for ever, here and there, by the sunshine; and sheltered in their repose by overhanging leaves and flowers, for ever fertile and for ever fresh. They may not occasion a feeling of solemn awe, but they enkindle one of admiring affection; and where the mountain and the bald rock would be productive only of strength and sternness, their softer featurings of brawling brook, bending and variegated shrubbery, wild flower, gadding vine, and undulating hillock, mould the contemplative spirit into gentleness and love. The scenery of the south seldom impresses at first, but it grows upon acquaintance; and in a little while, where once all things looked monotonous and unattractive, we learn to discover sweet influences that ravish us from ourselves at every step we take, into worlds and wilds, where all is fairy-like, wooing, and unchangingly sweet.

The night, though yet without a moon, was beautifully clear and cloudless. The stars had come out with all their brightness—a soft zephyr played drowsily and fitfully among the tops of the shrubbery, that lay, as it were, asleep on the circling hill-tops around; while the odours of complicated charm from a thousand floral knots, which had caught blooms from the rainbows, and dyed themselves in their stolen splendours, thickly studding the wild and matted grass which sustained them, brought along with them even a stronger influence than the rest of the scene, and might have taught a ready lesson of love to much sterner spirits than the two, now so unhappy, who were there to take their parting and last embrace.

The swift motion of a galloping steed was heard, and Forrester was at the place and hour of appointment. In mournful mood, he threw himself at

the foot of one of the hills, upon one of the tufted roots of the huge tree which sheltered the little hollow, and resigned himself to a somewhat bitter survey of his own condition, and of the privations and probable straits into which his own rash thoughtlessness had so unhappily involved him. His horse, docile and well trained, stood unfettered in the thicket, cropping the young and tender herbage at some little distance; but so habituated to rule that no other security than his own will was considered by his master necessary for his continued presence. The lover waited not long. Descending with slow but even steps, the hill, through a narrow pathway on one side of the wood, well known and frequently trodden by both, he beheld the approach of the maiden, and hurried forward to receive her. The terms upon which they had so long stood forbade constraint, and put at defiance all those formalities which under other circumstances might have grown out of the meeting. She advanced without pause or hesitancy, and the hand of her lover grasped that which she extended, his arm passed about her, his lip was fastened to her own, without let or hinderance, and, in that one sweet embrace, in that one moment of blissful forgetfulness, all other of life's circumstances had ceased to afflict. But they were not happy even at that moment of delight and illusion. The gentler spirit of the maiden's sex was uppermost, and the sad story of his crime, which at their last meeting had been told her, lay with heavy and foreboding influence at her heart. She was a gentle creature, and though dwelling in a wilderness, such is the prevailing influence upon female character, of the kind of education acquirable in the southern,—or, we may add, and thus perhaps furnish the reason for any peculiarity in this

respect—the slave-holding states, she partook in a large degree of that excessive delicacy, as well of spirit as of person, which, while a marked characteristic of that entire region, is apt to become of itself a disease, exhibiting itself too frequently in a nervousness and timidity that unfits its owner for the ruder necessities of life, and enables it to abide only under its more serene and summer aspects. The tale of blood, and its awful consequences, was perpetually recurring to her imagination. Her fancy described and dwelt upon its details, her thoughts wove it into a thousand startling tissues, until, though believing his crime unpremeditated, she almost shrank from the embrace of her lover, because of the blood so recently upon his hands. Placing her beside him upon the seat he had occupied before her coming, he tenderly rebuked her gloomy look and manner, while an inward and painful consciousness of its cause gave to his voice a hesitating tremor, and his eye, heretofore unquailing at any glance, no longer bold, now shrank downcast before the tearful emphasis of hers.

“You have come, Kate—come, according to your promise, yet you wear not the old looks. Your eye is vacant and stern—your heart, it beats sadly and hurriedly beneath my hand, as if there were gloomy and vexatious thoughts within.”

“And should I not be sad, Mark, and should you not be sad? Gloom and sorrow befit our situations alike; though for you I feel more than for myself. I think not so much of our parting, as of your misfortune in having partaken of this crime. There is to me but little occasion for grief in the temporary separation which I am sure will precede our final and inseparable union. But this dreadful deed, Mark—it is this that makes me sad. The knowledge that you, whom I thought too

gentle wantonly to crush the crawling insect, should have become without need the slayer of men—of innocent men, too, makes my heart bleed within, and my eyes fill ; and when I think of it, as indeed I now think of little else, and feel that its remorse and all its consequences must haunt you for many years of gloomy self-rebuke, I almost think, with my father, that it would be better we should now separate, to see each other no more. I think I could see you depart, knowing that it was final and for ever, with gladness and without a tear, were this sin not upon your head.”

“ Your words are cruel, Kate ; but you cannot speak to my spirit in language more severe than it speaks momentarily to itself. I never knew any thing of punishment before ; and the first lesson is a bitter one. Your words touch me but little now, as the tree, when the axe has once girdled it, has no feeling for any further stroke. Forbear then, dear Kate, as you love yourself. Brood not upon a subject that brings pain with it to your own spirit, and has almost ceased, except in its consequences, to operate upon mine. Let us now speak of those things which concern you nearly, and me not a little—of the only thing, which, beside this deed of death, troubles my thought at this moment. Let us speak of our future hope—if hope there may be for me, after the stern sentence which your lips uttered in part even now.”

“ It was for you—for your safety, believe me, Mark, that I spoke ; my own heart was wrung with the language of my lips—the language of my cooler thought. I spoke only for your safety and not for myself. Could—I again repeat—could this deed be undone—could you be free from the reproach and the punishment, I would be content, though the strings of my heart cracked with its own

doom, to forego all claim upon you—to give you—to give up my own hope of happiness for ever.”

Her words were passionate, and at their close her head sank upon his shoulder, while her tears gushed forth without restraint, and in defiance of all her efforts. The heart of the woodman was deeply and painfully affected, and the words refused to leave his lips, while a kindred anguish shook his manly frame, and rendered it almost a difficulty with him to sustain the slight fabric of hers. With a stern effort, however, he recovered himself, and reseating her upon the bank from which, in the agitation of the moment, they had both arisen, he endeavoured to sooth her spirit, by unfolding his plan of future life.

“My present aim is the nation—I shall cross the Chestatee river to-morrow, and shall push at once for the forest of Etowee, and beyond the Etowee river. I know the place well, and have been through it once before. There I shall linger until I hear all the particulars of this affair in its progress, and determine upon my route accordingly. If the stir is great, as I reckon it will be, I shall push into Tennessee, and perhaps go for the Mississippi. Could I hope that your father would consent to remove, I should at once do this and make a settlement, where, secure from interruption and all together, we might live happily and honourably for the future.”

“And why not do so now—why stop at all among the Cherokees? Why not go at once into Mississippi, and begin the world, as you propose in the end to do?”

“What! and leave you for ever—now Kate, you are indeed cruel. I had not thought to have listened to such a recommendation from one who loved me as you profess.”

"As I do, Mark—I say nothing which I do not feel. It does not follow that you will be any nigher your object, if my father continues firm in his refusal, though nigher to me, by lingering about in the nation. On the contrary, will he not, hearing of you in the neighbourhood, be more close in his restraints upon me. Will not your chance of exposure, too, be so much the greater, as to make it incumbent upon him to pursue his determination with rigour; while, on the other hand, if you remove yourself out of all reach of Georgia, in the Mississippi, and there begin a settlement, I am sure that he will look upon the affair with different notions."

"It cannot be, Kate—it cannot be. You know I have had but a single motive for living so long among this people and in these parts. I disliked both, and only lingered with a single hope, that I might be blessed with your presence always, and in the event of my sufficient success that I might win you altogether for myself. I have not done much for this object, and this unhappy affair forbids me for the present to do more. Is not this enough, Katharine, and must I bury myself from you a thousand miles in the forest, ignorant of what may be going on, and without any hope, such as I have lived for before. Is the labour I have undergone—the life I have led, to have no fruits? Will you too be the first to recommend forgetfulness; to overthrow my chance of happiness. No—it must not be. Hear me, Katharine Walton—hear me, and say I have not worked altogether in vain. I have acquired some little by my toils, and can acquire more. There is one thing now, one blessing which you may afford, and the possession of which will enable me to go with a light heart and a strong hand into any forests, winning comforts

for both of us—happiness, if the world have it—and nothing to make us afraid.”

He spoke with deep energy, and for a moment she looked inquiringly into his face. The expression was satisfactory, and she replied without hesitation.

“I understand you, Mark Forrester—I understand you, but it must not be. I must regard and live for affections beside my own? would you have me fly for ever from those who have been all to me—from those to whom I am all—from my father—from my dear, my old mother! Fie, Mark.”

“And are you not all to me, Katharine,—the sole, the singular—the one thing for which I would live, and wanting which I care not to live? Ay, Katharine, fly with me from all,—and yet not for ever. They will follow you, and our end will then be answered. Unless you do this, they would linger on in this place without an object, even if permitted, which is very doubtful, to hold their ground—enjoying life as a vegetable, and dead before life itself is extinct.”

“Spare your speech, Mark—on this point you urge me in vain,” was the firm response of the maiden. “Though I feel for you as I feel for none other, I also feel that I have other ties and other obligations, all inconsistent with the step which you would have me take. I will not have you speak of it further—on this particular I am immovable.”

A shade of mortification clouded the face of Forrester as she uttered these words, and, for a moment he was silent. Resuming, at length, with something of regulation in his manner, he continued the conversation.

“Well, Kate, since you will have it so, I forbear; though, what course is left for you and what hope for me, if your father continues in his present

humour, I am at a loss to see. There is one thing, however—there is one pledge that I would exact from you before we part.”

He took her hand tenderly as he spoke, and his eyes glistening with tearful expectation, were fixed upon her own ; but she did not immediately reply. She seemed rather to await the naming of the pledge of which he spoke. There was a struggle going on between her mind and her affections, and though, in the end, the latter seemed to obtain the mastery, the sense of propriety, the moral guardianship of her own spirit battled sternly and fearlessly against their suggestions. She would make no promise which might, by any possibility, bind her to any engagement inconsistent with other and primary obligations.

“I know not, Mark, what may be the pledge which you would have from me, to which I could consent with propriety. When I hear your desires, plainly expressed to my understanding, I shall better know how to reply. You heard the language of my father—I must obey his wishes as far as I know them. Though sometimes rough, and always irregular in his habits, to me he has been at all times tender and kind—he has never treated me roughly, and I would not now disobey his commands. Still, in this matter, my heart inclines too much in your favour not to make me less scrupulous on the subject than I should otherwise desire to be. Besides, I have so long held myself yours, and with his sanction yours only, that I can the more easily listen to your entreaties. If, then, you truly love me, you will, I am sure, ask nothing that I should not grant. Speak—what is the pledge?”

“It shall come with no risk, Kate, believe me, none. Heaven forbid that I should bring a solitary grief to your bosom ; yet it may adventure in

some respects both mind and person, if you be not wary. Knowing your father, as you know him too, I would have from you a pledge—a promise, here, solemnly uttered in the eye of heaven, and in the holy stillness of this place, which has witnessed other of our vows no less sacred and solemn, that, should he sanction the prayer of another who seeks your love, and command your obedience, that you will not obey—that you will not go quietly a victim to the altar—that you will not pledge to another the same vow which has been long since pledged to me.”

He paused a moment for a reply, but she spoke not—and with something like impetuosity he proceeded:—

“You make no reply, Katharine? You hear my entreaty—my prayer. It involves no impropriety—it stands in the way of no other duty, since, I trust, the relationship between us is to the full as binding and dear as that of any other which may call for your regard. All that I ask is, that you will not dispose of yourself to another, your heart not going with your hand, whatever may be the authority which may require it; at least, not until you are fully assured that it is beyond my power to claim you, or I become unworthy to press the claim.”

“It is strange, Mark, that you should speak in a manner of which there is so little need. The pledge long since uttered as solemnly as you now require, under these very boughs, should satisfy you on this particular.”

“So it should, Kate,—and so it would, perhaps, could I now reason on any subject. But my doubts are not now of your love, but of your firmness in resisting a control at variance with your duty to yourself. Your words reassure me, however, and

now, though with no glad heart, I shall pass over the border, and hope for the better days which are to make us happy."

"Not so fast, Master Forrester," exclaimed the voice of old Walton, emerging from the cover of the sycamore, to the shelter of which he had advanced unobserved, and had been the unsuspected auditor of the dialogue from first to last. The couple, with an awkward consciousness, started up at the speech, taken by surprise, and neither uttering a word in reply to this sudden address.

"You must first answer, young man, to the charge of advising my daughter to disobedience, as I have heard you for the last half hour; and to elopement, which she had the good sense to refuse. I thought, Master Forrester, that you were better bred than to be guilty of such offences."

"I know them not as such, Mr. Walton. I had your own sanction to my engagement with Katharine, and do not see that after that you had any right to break it off."

"You do not—eh! Well, perhaps you are right, and I have thought better of the matter myself; and between us, Kate has behaved so well and spoken so prettily to you, and obeyed my orders, as she should have done, that I'm thinking to look more kindly on the whole affair."

"Are you, dear father—I am so delighted!"

"Hush, minx—the business is mine and none of yours. Hark you, Mark. You must fly—there's no two ways about that; and, between us, there will be a devil of a stir in this matter. I have it from good authority, that the governor will riddle the whole nation but he'll have every man, woman, and child concerned in this difficulty; so that'll be no place for you. You must go right on to the *Mississippi*, and enter lands enough for us all.

Enter them in Kate's name, and they'll be secure. As soon as you've fixed that business, write on; say where you are, and we'll be down upon you, bag and baggage, in no time and less."

"Oh, dear father—this is so good of you."

"Pshaw, get away, minx; I don't like kisses *jest* after supper; it takes the taste all out of my mouth of what I've been eating."

Forrester was loud in his acknowledgments, and sought by eulogistic professions to do away the effect of all that stuff, on the reverse of the picture, which he might have uttered in the previous conversation; but the old man cut him short with his wonted querulousness—

"Oh, done with your blarney, boy. 'It's all my eye and Betty Martin!' Won't you go in and take supper. There's something left, I reckon."

But Forrester had now no idea of eating, and declined accordingly, alleging his determination to set off immediately upon his route; a determination which the old man highly approved of.

"You are right, Mark—move's the word, and the sooner you go about it the better. Here's my hand on your bargain, and good-by—I reckon you'll have something more to say to Kate; and, I suppose you don't want me to help you in saying it—so I leave you. She's used to the way—and if she's at all afraid, you can easily see her home."

With a few more words the old man took his departure, leaving the young people as happy now as he had before found them sad and sorrowful. They did not doubt that the reason of this change was as he alleged it, and gave themselves no thought as to causes, satisfied as they were with effects. But old Walton had not proceeded without his host—he had been advised of the contem-

plated turn-out of all the squatters from the gold region ; and having no better tenure than any of his neighbours, he very prudently made a merit of necessity, and took his measures as we have seen. The lovers were satisfied, and their interview now wore, though at parting, a more sunshiny and genial complexion. But why prolong a scene which admits of so little variety, as that which describes the sweets and the strifes and the sorrows of mortal love ? We take it, there is no reader of novels so little conversant with matters of this nature, as not to know how they begin and how they end ; and contenting ourselves with separating the parties—an act hard-hearted enough, in all conscience—we shall not with idle and questionable sympathy dwell upon the sorrows of their separation. We may utter a remark, however, which the particular instance before us occasions, in relation to the singular influence of true love upon the mental and moral character of the man. There is no influence in the world's circumstance so truly purifying, elevating, and refining, as love. It instils high and generous sentiments—it ennobles human endeavour—it sanctifies defeat and denial—it polishes manners—it gives to morals a tincture of devotion, and, as with the spell of magic, such as Milton describes in *Comus*, it dissipates with a glance the wild rout of low desires and insane follies, which so much blur and blot up the otherwise fair face of human society. It permits of no meanness in its train—it expels vulgarity, and with a high stretch towards perfected humanity, it unearths the grovelling nature, and gives it aspirations of soul and sunshine. Its effect upon Forrester had been of this description. It had been his only tutor, and had taught him nobly in numberless respects. In every association with the maiden of his affec-

tions, his tone, his language, his temper, and his thoughts seemed to have undergone improvement and purification. He seemed quite another man whenever he came into her presence, and whenever the thought of her was in his heart. Indeed, such was the effect of this passion upon both of them; though this may have been partially the result of other circumstances arising from their particular situation. For a long time they had known few enjoyments that were not intimately connected with the image of one or the other of them; and thus, from having no other objects of contemplation or concern, they refined upon one another. As the minute survey in the forest of the single leaf, which, for years may not have attracted the eye, unfolds the fine veins, the fanciful outline, the clear, green, and transparent texture, and the delicate shadowings of innumerable hues won from the skies and the sunshine; so, day by day, surveying the single object, they had become familiar with attractions in one another, which the passing world would never have supposed either of them to possess. In such a region, where there are few competitors for human love and regard, the heart clings with hungering tenacity to the few stray affections that spring up, here and there, like flowers dropped in the desert by some kindly, careless hand, making a bloom and a blessing for the untrodden wilderness. Nor do they blossom there in vain, since, as the sage has told us, there is no breeze that wafts not life, no sun that brings not smiles, no water that bears not refreshment, no flower that has not charms and a solace, for some heart that could not well hope to be happy without them.

They separated on the verge of the copse to which he had attended her, their hands having all the way been passionately linked, and a seal having

been set upon their mutual vows by the long, loving embrace which concluded their interview. The cottage was in sight, and from the umbrageous shade which surrounded him, he beheld her enter its precincts in safety ; then, returning to their place of tryst, he led forth his steed, and with a single bound, was once more in his saddle and once more a wanderer. The cheerlessness of such a fate as that before him, even under the changed aspect of his affairs, to those unaccustomed to the rather too migratory habits of our southern and western people, would seem somewhat severe ; but the only hardship in his present fortune, to the mind of Forrester, was the privation and protraction of his love arrangements. The wild woodland adventure common to the habits of the people of this class, had a stimulating effect upon his spirit at all other times ; and, even now—though perfectly legitimate for a lover to move slowly from his mistress—the moon just rising above the trees, and his horse in full gallop through their winding intricacies, a warm and bracing energy came to his aid, and his heart grew cheery under its inspiriting influences. He was full of the future, rich in anticipation, and happy in the contemplation of a thousand projects. With a free rein he plunged forward into the recesses of the forest, dreaming of a cottage in the Mississippi, a heart at ease, and Katharine Walton, with all her beauties, for ever at hand to keep it so.

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1. The first part of the text is a list of names and titles.

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